

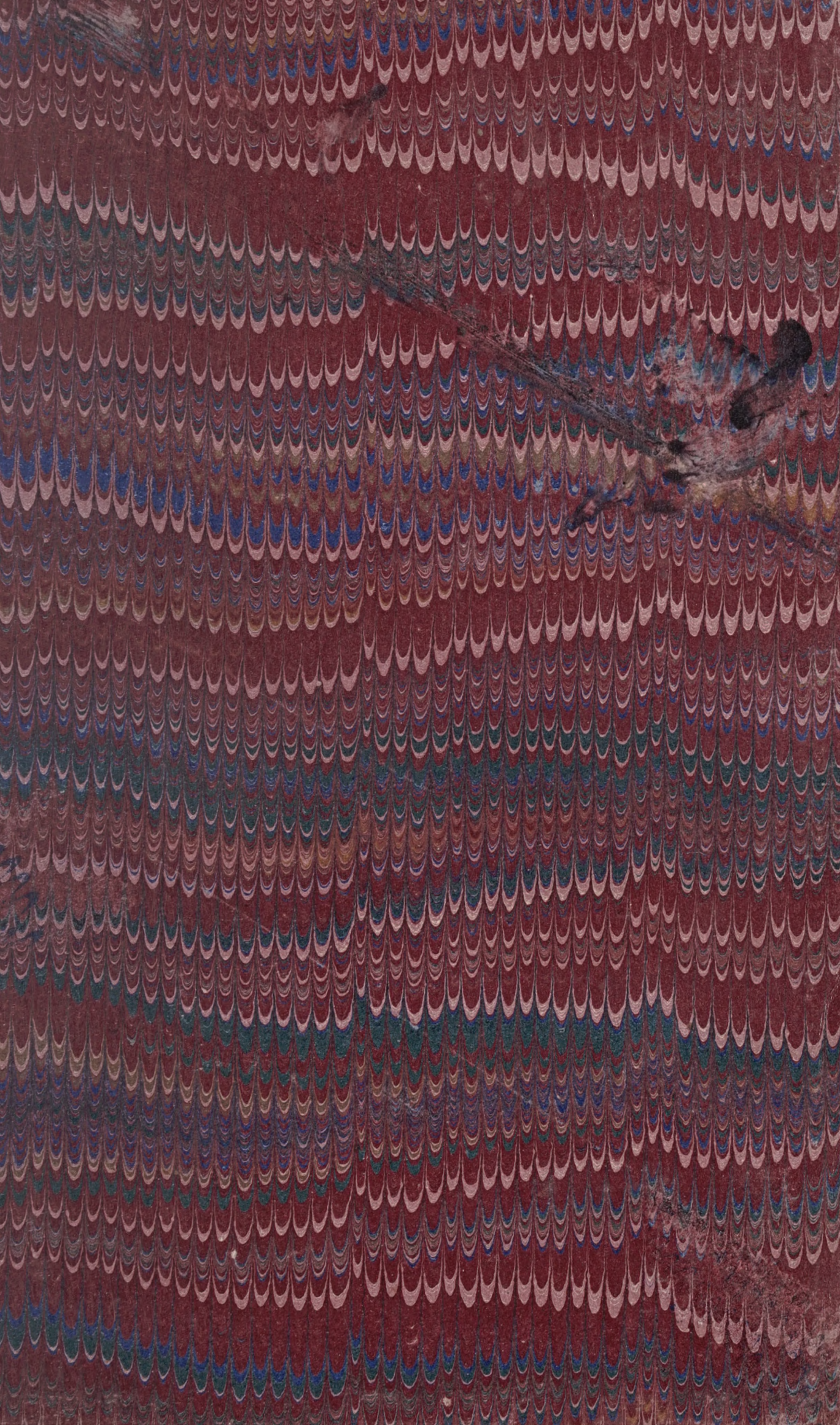
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V. 4
GORDON BALDWIN.

PHILOSOPHER'S PENDULUM.

BY
RUDOLPH LINDAU.



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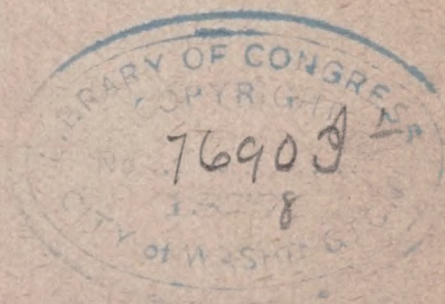
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AND

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GORDON BALDWIN.

I.

GEORGE FORBES had spared neither time nor money in furnishing his bachelor-apartments as handsomely as possible. He possessed some experience ; he had seen many countries and many people ; and he was so rich that even in New York, his native city, people talked about his "large" fortune. Under these circumstances, it is not difficult for a man, particularly if he inhabits Paris, to gain among his friends the reputation of possessing a fine taste. Forbes had, in the first place, consulted a talented young artist ; he had then employed for many months the best Parisian workmen, and had given his upholsterer *carte blanche*. By this rather expensive but very simple method he had succeeded in furnishing his house near the Champs-Élysées both tastefully and comfortably. The paintings by Corot, Rousseau, Diaz, Rosa Bonheur, and others, which

adorned his drawing-room, study, and dining-room, ranked among the acknowledged masterpieces of those artists. The large Rubens in his bedroom was undoubtedly genuine ; the chandeliers and clock were models of French art ; and nowhere could be found more comfortable easy-chairs and sofas than in the cozy rooms of the "Hôtel Forbes" in the Rue Dumont d'Urville.

During one whole week after Forbes had taken possession of his house, he had wandered every morning with renewed delight through the rooms of his new home with a feeling of pride, as though all the beautiful objects which gave him so much pleasure had been his own work. He had received with a self-satisfied smile the compliments which all his visitors paid him on his exquisite taste ; but very soon he became as accustomed to his pictures, his china, and his bronzes, as to his comfortable chairs and his good cook : and at the time we make his acquaintance, about four years after he had settled in Paris, all the splendid works of art which surrounded him in his house could no longer attract his attention, even for an instant.

George Forbes was now thirty-three, and the life which he led was, in spite of much apparent variety, a monotonous one. Seven months of the year he spent in Paris. During the summer he went from one fashionable watering-place to another. He might be seen at Trouville, at Biarritz,

or in the Pyrenees ; sometimes, also, he went to Baden or Homburg, where at that time the gambling-tables were still to be found. Once he had returned to the United States and shown his aristocratic, cold, *blasé* face in Newport and Saratoga. In Paris, where he lived during the winter and spring until the end of May, he usually took a ride in the morning in the Bois de Boulogne, breakfasted at home, yawned for an hour over the newspaper, his letters, or a novel, and sometimes fell asleep over them ; then he paid a few visits or showed his beautiful horses in the Avenue de l'Impératrice, and at seven o'clock he made his appearance at the Café Anglais or at Bignon's, to take his dinner. After that he went to a theatre, or to some reception in the American colony. There he was an object of great interest to young widows and to mothers with grown-up daughters. He also met with men in this society, who, thinking that the young millionaire might prove a serviceable acquaintance, spared no trouble to make themselves agreeable to him. But Forbes was not grateful for the kindness shown him on all sides, and not one of his numerous acquaintances could boast of being on intimate and confidential terms with him. He was suspicious. In former years he had many times been deceived—a misfortune which may likewise happen to poor people in this world ; but he had never forgotten nor forgiven it, and he always feared

that every one who approached him in a friendly manner wanted some of his money. The belief in unselfish kindness had never been very strong in him, and such little trustfulness as he had possessed he had lost long ago. Friendliness, as soon as it went beyond commonplace politeness, seemed to him interested flattery, and made him still more reserved and cautious ; and so it had come to pass that young and honorable men, who under ordinary circumstances might have been his friends, felt themselves repelled and gradually withdrew from him ; finally his acquaintance included mainly men who richly deserved his suspicious contempt for them.

Late in the evening the lonely man went to his club. He played high, and often won considerable sums. He was a calm and cautious player. When he had luck on his side, he was ever ready to risk *all* his winnings, and he would put with equal coolness a few louis or a bundle of bank-notes on the table. But, when fortune was not favorable, he would only lose the money he had with him—at the outside a few thousand francs ; then he would rise with a yawn—he had the habit of yawning frequently—and go into the reading-room, look over the evening papers, and at a late hour drive home.

He was a dangerous, careful, unpopular player. You might lose a fortune to him, but you would never win from him more than what he

happened to have in his pocket. His oldest acquaintance had never seen him borrow money to go on playing with.

One evening in the month of December, 186—, Forbes came to his club as usual, at about eleven o'clock, and, after exchanging a few words with his friends, took his seat at the green table. He had won a considerable sum the night before, and a young man who had been one of the heaviest losers, Henry Wetmore, asked him in a friendly manner to take the bank himself. Forbes did not answer at once, but, when Wetmore repeated his request, he replied carelessly and in an undertone that it was not his habit to consider a new game as the continuation of a former one ; he was just beginning to play, and he could not yet say whether it might suit him on this occasion to take the bank or to play against it.

“These are very convenient rules,” said Wetmore, with a sneer.

Forbes looked at him long and steadfastly, and after a painful pause said : “I can only express my regret if you are vexed because you lost yesterday. I cannot think for a moment that you wish to pick a quarrel with me ; you have no right to dictate to me how to play, nor do I imagine that you claim that right. But, if you believe I owe you your revenge, pray name the sum for which you wish to play against me, and it will give me great pleasure to place myself at your

disposal." Every one present felt for poor Wetmore, who had borrowed with great difficulty the money to pay his debt that evening, and who in his heart was cursing his fortunate and powerful adversary. But Forbes knew he had the right on his side, while Wetmore felt that he stood alone, and that the wisest thing he could do was to let the matter drop. He muttered with a touch of ill-humor, but politely nevertheless: "You take the matter too seriously; I did not mean it so."

Forbes counted his money, played even more cautiously than usual, lost a trifle, and went home at about two o'clock. After he had left the club, Wetmore began again to complain of him, and this time everybody agreed to his strictures.

"There is one thing that comforts me," he said in conclusion, "and that is, that Forbes never really enjoys his game. I get vexed sometimes when I lose, but then I am all the better pleased when I happen to win. Forbes is always bored, and it serves the disagreeable rich fellow right."

Forbes, on his way home, knew perfectly well that at that very moment they were abusing him at the club, and that not one of his numerous acquaintances, who were in the habit of meeting him with a friendly smile, would think of taking his part in his absence.

The next morning, while riding in the Bois de Boulogne, he made some plans for traveling.

"I will go for a few weeks to Nice, and Flor-

ence, and Rome," he said to himself. "Perhaps I may amuse myself a little more there than here. At any rate, I shall see some new faces, and not always that fellow Wetmore and the rest of them. The whole set is insufferable."

When, an hour later, he returned home, his servant handed him two letters which had just arrived. He placed them, without even looking at them, on the table, and it was only after he had dressed and found that there was still a quarter of an hour before breakfast, that he threw himself into an easy-chair before the fire, and read them. The first ran thus :

"97 AVENUE FRIEDLAND, *Wednesday*.

"DEAR MR. FORBES : It will give us much pleasure if you will dine with us on Friday next, at seven o'clock. Yours very sincerely,

"MARIE LELAND, *née* DE MONTEMARS."

"That woman never forgets to remind one that she comes from a noble family, and that she has married old Leland only for his money. *Née* De Montemars ! What is that to me ? But never mind ; Jane Leland is a handsome, clever girl, and I have nothing better to do on Friday. I will accept the invitation."

The note was carefully replaced in its envelope and laid aside.

The second letter was a longer one. As soon

as Forbes had looked at the address and recognized the writing, he opened it with an angry frown ; he then read with great attention :

“HAKODATE, *September 2, 186-*.

“DEAR GEORGE: You must do me the justice to admit that I have not troubled you for a long time with news of myself. Nor would I have written now could I have avoided it. I know my letters give you no pleasure, and consequently I do not care much to write to you. I have, however, nothing unpleasant to say, and I beg you not to throw this letter aside without reading it.

“When I arrived at Hakodate, four years ago, I made the acquaintance of a young Englishman, named Gordon Baldwin; although I had no claim upon him, he received me into his house with the greatest kindness, and I was his guest during several months. I had long been unaccustomed to *kind* treatment. Baldwin's goodness made a deep impression upon me, and I felt very grateful to him. I conceived a great affection for him; and he, seeing this, I suppose, also took a liking for me. I had so long been tossed about like a ship without a rudder, finding neither place nor safety, that I scarcely dared to hope that fortune had led me at last into a haven of rest. As it was my intention to leave Hakodate in a few months, I was not as reserved in my conversation with Baldwin as I ought perhaps to have been : I meant no harm by

being communicative ; I did not think myself bound to spoil the pleasure of our friendly intercourse by a suspicious reticence. I cannot boast of that calm reserve which distinguishes you.

“So I told Baldwin, during the long walks we took together, something of my history. I did not disclose my true name, for I would not break the promise I had given to you. I called myself Graham. I *told* him that I had rich relations, from whom I was separated forever, through some misfortune, which I could not explain. I also spoke of you. You will think this strange; you would certainly never dream of speaking of me. But then we are different. I said nothing of you but what is good, praising your prudence, your coolness, and your energy. I spoke of the extraordinary success which has attended you through life, a success which you owe chiefly to your perspicacity and determination. I said nothing of the ties which unite us, and I mentioned you merely as a friend of my youth. As you see, I did not commit any great indiscretion. It can do you no harm that Baldwin, who is as simple-minded and as trusting as a child, should think that you once did a good turn to a poor devil of the name of Graham.

“Hakodate lies out of the beaten track. Besides the Japanese, there are only a few English, American, and German merchants living here, and foreign travelers seldom find their way to this place.

“For many years I saw nothing that could remind me of the past, and I felt as though I were gradually awaking to a new life. I was successful in the first small speculations I attempted. Baldwin procured me credit in Yokohama, Shanghai, and Hong-Kong, and so gave me the means of trying my un hoped-for good luck on a larger scale. All went well with me, and at the present day I possess a moderate, well-earned fortune, and am a respected member of the foreign community of Hakodate. All this I owe to Gordon Baldwin. But for him I must have gone to ruin ; for my means and my courage were equally exhausted when I landed in Yesso.

“A few weeks ago, Baldwin told me that, having spent six years in China and Japan, he had now the intention of taking a trip to Europe. While discussing this plan he mentioned your name, which he unfortunately remembered, although it had not passed my lips for a long time. I had told him formerly that you lived in Paris ; and he asked me, without having an idea that it might be unpleasant to me, to give him a letter of introduction to you. I could not well refuse without laying myself open to suspicion. I might, indeed, have invented some excuse, but I did not like to run the risk of chance bringing you together. I have therefore given him a letter for you. Pray take into consideration the circumstances under which this has happened, and ex-

cuse the liberty I have taken. Remember how much I owe to Baldwin, and receive him kindly. I have given him to understand that it might be painful to you to speak of my past life, and I feel perfectly sure that he will avoid any allusion which might embarrass you.

“You will find my friend the best and noblest of men. He is a few years younger than you are, but his independent life in foreign lands has made him prematurely old. He comes of a good family; but all his near relations are dead, and he stands pretty nearly alone in the world. He is good-looking, well-informed, and well-bred. To complete my sketch I may add that he possesses a large fortune, and that his business in Hakodate, the management of which he has intrusted to me during his absence, has brought him in for some few years past from twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars annually.

“And now, my dear George, I will say good-by. I don't expect an answer to this letter, and it is not likely that I shall soon have occasion to write to you again. With unchanged affection,

“Yours,

THOMAS.”

As Forbes finished reading the letter, his servant entered and announced breakfast. He folded up the letter, put it in the side-pocket of his coat, and, with a thoughtful air, went into the dining-room.

II.

IN one of the most fashionable *cafés* of the Boulevard des Italiens, before a small table, which was laid for two people, sat a young man of between twenty-five and twenty-eight years of age. His appearance had already attracted the attention of the waiters, of the *dame du comptoir*, and of several of the guests ; for although one could see at a glance that the stranger belonged to good society, yet, in this splendid room, so luxuriously furnished, and among the elegant ladies and gentlemen who were seated at the tables around him, he did not seem quite in his right place. He wore a faded traveling-suit, which, like himself, had evidently seen a good deal of rough weather. He had straight, light hair and clear, gray eyes, before whose glance the inquisitive eyes of the guest who wished to examine him fell involuntarily and quickly. His nose and mouth were large, but well-shaped ; his forehead was high, and, as far as the hat had protected it, remarkably white. The rest of the lean, powerful face was much sunburned, and contrasted strangely in color with the snowy-white forehead, the fair hair, and the grayish-blue eyes. Long, reddish mustaches fell low over the finely-cut mouth. The honest, fearless look, the small, round head, the broad shoulders, the powerful chest, the large, well-formed, sinewy

hands, and the long legs, presented altogether an appearance which recalled times long gone by. An iron helmet and a heavy sword would have better suited the stranger than the black-silk hat and the slight cane which the waiter had taken from him when he first entered the room.

The young man had looked several times at his watch, and as soon as the clock struck seven he beckoned to one of the waiters.

“Give me a good dinner,” he said.

“Does not monsieur wish to order anything in particular?”

“No, I leave that to you. Bring me a good dinner.”

“By your order I laid covers for two.”

“Yes, but it seems my friend is not coming. He may perhaps be late, and you can serve him when he arrives.”

The stranger spoke French fluently, but with an unmistakable English accent. The experienced waiter, who during ten years had seen great and noble personages from all parts of the world, classed the new guest under the head of “a crazy lord, who has been shooting tigers in India, and wants now to beat Parisian preserves.”

The supposed lord had finished his oysters, soup, and *entrée*, and was about to do justice to a more substantial dish that had been placed before him, when the door opened, and George Forbes, dressed with faultless elegance, entered

the room. He bowed to the lady at the *comptoir* and stopped before the sunburned stranger, who merely looked up, and, without allowing himself to be disturbed in his dinner, said: "You are late; but, as you see, I did not let that interfere with me."

"One must be punctual with you, it seems," replied Forbes, with a smile.

"No, I don't care about that, so long as I am not expected to wait. Take a seat. I have already ascertained that my appetite is better than yours, and, if you hurry a little, we may get to the dessert together."

Forbes did as he was told, and took up the bill-of-fare, which he seemed to study carefully. How was it that Baldwin, whom he had only known for five days, took liberties with him which none of his Parisian acquaintances would have attempted? Every one of them would have waited for him at least a quarter of an hour; or, if they had not done so, would at any rate have offered some excuse. Baldwin had not granted him a minute's grace, and had never thought of apologizing. On the other hand, Forbes, who, as a rule, paid no attention to the feelings of others, and who was spoiled by the courteous attention which he received on all sides, not only thought Baldwin's conduct perfectly natural, but even said in an undertone, "I beg your pardon;" while the other

nodded good-humoredly, as much as to say, "Never mind, I forgive you."

Only six days before, Forbes had received the following dispatch from Havre: "Graham will have informed you of my arrival. I will call on you to-morrow morning.—Gordon Baldwin." And on the following day, at ten o'clock, Mr. Gordon Baldwin—in an old, gray traveling-suit, and a soft felt hat, but with faultless linen—had made his appearance. He had shaken Forbes's hand heartily, like an old friend, and had talked at once in such a quiet, sensible, comfortable way, that Forbes, whose manner at first had been somewhat constrained and cold, had gradually assumed a more friendly countenance and had become almost sociable.

An hour of pleasant conversation had quickly passed. Baldwin sat in an easy-chair, and talked about Japan, and Graham, and about his business and plans. Now and then he indulged in some humorous and always good-tempered remark, and then his bright eyes laughed so merrily that Forbes listened with a sincere and to him perfectly novel sense of pleasure. When the servant announced breakfast, Forbes invited the stranger to share it with him, and after the meal was over he asked Baldwin to stop at his house during the few days he intended to spend in Paris. Baldwin had accepted this offer with the same easy grace with which he had taken the cigar his host had

offered him ten minutes before, and which he was then smoking with visible enjoyment.

Since then Forbes and Baldwin had been together from morning to night, almost without interruption, and an intimacy of a peculiar sort had sprung up between these two men who were so totally unlike. Baldwin saw nothing strange in this, and never gave the matter a second thought; but Forbes was astonished. He could not understand why it was that, whenever he was with Baldwin, he felt himself to be a different and a better man than his usual self. He could talk and joke unreservedly with the "wild man of Yesso," as he called him, and more than once he had caught himself speaking to his new friend quite confidentially. Baldwin wanted absolutely nothing of Forbes: there lay the secret of the pleasant impression he had made on the suspicious rich man. He coveted neither his horses, nor his box at the opera, nor his money; he ignored thoroughly and sincerely that his host was the "rich Mr. Forbes." He saw nothing in his new acquaintance but a pleasant companion. Forbes was conscious of this; it was a new and refreshing feeling for him to associate with a man who wanted no favors of him—with a man, indeed, on whom he could confer no favors, even if he tried.

"Well, what have you ordered?" asked Forbes, after he had taken his seat opposite to Baldwin.

"A good dinner."

"I hope you will get it. What is it to be?"

"I don't know yet; but I have an excellent appetite, and I am ready for any agreeable surprise."

"Did you leave the choice to the waiter?"

"Entirely."

Forbes smiled.

"Can you make out this nonsense?" continued Baldwin, taking up the bill-of-fare: 'Potage parmentier; filet de sole Joinville—why not Né-mours or Montpensier?—épigrammes d'agneau; chafroid de volaille,' etc. I really understand the Ainos of Yesso a good deal better than this culinary jargon."

Forbes called the waiter, and in a peremptory manner, but with many detailed instructions, ordered a choice dinner. Baldwin, evidently amused, listened attentively.

"You know everything," he said, with a smile.

"You must be my teacher here."

"With pleasure. By-the-by, have you been to your tailor?"

"Of course."

"When will you have your suit?"

"To-morrow night."

"It is high time."

"Is it, really?" said Baldwin, quietly. Then he examined attentively the sleeves of his coat, and said, thoughtfully: "It is only a couple of

months since this suit cost me a small fortune in San Francisco. True, it has seen a deal of rough weather on the prairies and on the Atlantic since then, but it seems to me very good still. However, after to-morrow I will appear before you in festive garments only."

At about half-past seven an elderly, gentleman-like man, with an elegantly-dressed and handsome young lady, entered the restaurant and took their seats at a table near our two friends. Forbes, who was sitting with his back to the new-comers, did not at first notice them, but the young lady quickly attracted the unobtrusive but admiring attention of Baldwin. This had not been unremarked by her, and the eyes of the young Parisian and of the traveler met several times. At last Forbes became aware that something was going on behind his back, and asked, carelessly :

"What are you looking at?"

"At a pretty face."

Forbes turned round slowly, then coloring slightly he rose, bowed, and went up to the table where the old gentleman and his young companion were seated. They received him in the most friendly manner.

"I suppose Mrs. Leland has not returned to Paris?" asked Forbes.

"No, we expect her to-morrow," replied the old gentleman, "and you see how we take advantage of our liberty. During the last four days

we have not once dined at home. Jane wants me to show her the Parisian restaurants, and like a well-trained father I make it a point to obey her."

"Is that gentleman your friend of whom you spoke yesterday?" asked the young lady, in a whisper.

"Yes," replied Forbes, in the same tone, and, smiling with some embarrassment, he added: "You see, I have not exaggerated, he comes straight from the wilderness; but in a few days he will have a more civilized appearance, and I will then take the liberty of introducing him to you."

"Your friend will always be welcome," said the old gentleman. Forbes went back to his place opposite Baldwin, and, in that affectedly unconcerned manner which we generally assume when we are speaking of a person who, we know, is watching us, he told him that the young lady was Miss Jane Leland, the daughter of Mr. Leland, a rich banker of New York.

"Rich or poor," said Baldwin, "she is exceedingly pretty, and pleases me very much."

"You shall make her acquaintance," continued Forbes. "I have already spoken of you, and will introduce you whenever you like." Jane Leland knew very well that the two young men were talking of her; but she was accustomed to attract the attention of those around her, and she managed to look perfectly cool and unconcerned. A

few minutes later Baldwin and Forbes rose to leave the restaurant. Forbes stepped up once more to Mr. Leland's table to say good-by, while Baldwin passed on with one of those awkward half-bows which we sometimes make to people whom we know without having been introduced to them.

III.

A FEW days after Baldwin had seen Miss Leland for the first time, he was formally presented to the young lady and her parents, and in a very short time he became a frequent and welcome visitor at the house of the American family. In the beginning of March he had gone to London on business ; but at the end of a week, and much sooner than he was expected, he had returned ; and now he had been in Paris two months without even alluding to any intention of going away soon.

Forbes was more than satisfied with this state of things ; he was quite delighted. His whole manner of life had been most agreeably changed by the presence of that cheerful, unassuming guest in his house. Already he began to think with uneasiness of the time when this pleasant intercourse must come to an end. Baldwin had said once, before his journey to England, that toward the end of the year he would return to Hakodate.

"Why don't you remain in Europe?" asked Forbes.

"Because my business is in Japan, and my money is invested there."

"Can't you close out your business?" asked Forbes again; "you surely do not intend to spend your whole life among those half-civilized Japanese and those wild Ainos?"

"Certainly not; but I must bear it a little longer, until I have earned enough to live in Europe without the half of the income which my Japanese business gives me at present."

"And how long will that take?"

"About four or five years, with good luck."

"Five years, if you are lucky; that is a long time. And, now, supposing you have no luck as you expect, what then?"

"I never have given that a thought; I let the morrow take care of itself."

"And when do you think of going back?"

"There is no hurry about that; probably toward the end of the year. If I am in Hakodate by next spring, that will be time enough."

The month of May had come—Baldwin had not spoken again of going away; nor did he seem to think about it. Indeed, so it was; the thought of leaving Paris never came to him. The bright eyes of Jane Leland had cast a spell upon him. He was madly, hopelessly in love with her. He had been, in the fullest sense of the word, bewitched by

the brown-eyed, golden-haired, graceful American girl. All his thoughts, wishes, and hopes, were centred in her. This unspoken passion made him, as happy, as miserable, as light-hearted, as melancholy, as generous, as cowardly, and as silly, as it does most people who are in that same enviable condition. In one respect only Baldwin differed from most lovers : he did not talk about his love. He had not made a confidant of Forbes, who nevertheless had long been aware of his friend's state of mind. Jane, too, to say nothing of Mr. and Mrs. Leland, had without much difficulty guessed their new friend's secret. Mrs. Leland, *née* De Montemars, was by no means pleased at this discovery, but neither was she made uneasy by it. Her prudent Jane inspired her with the most perfect and well-justified confidence. Mr. Baldwin was not a son-in-law according to her coldly-calculating heart. She had long ago selected the wealthy George Forbes as a suitable husband for her daughter.

Old Mr. Leland felt very kindly disposed toward the young Englishman, but he was not allowed to have any voice in the matter. His wife, indeed, had very quickly put a stop to his remarks when, one evening, he had timidly alluded to the amiable qualities of "the young man from Japan." Jane herself was not proud of her last conquest. She was accustomed to triumph. She did not dislike Baldwin, certainly,

but the thought of marrying him had never once occurred to her. She was now twenty-three, and during the last four years she had been courted in the most various ways. She numbered in her collection sentimental, passionate, melancholy, witty, and sensible admirers. Each in turn had amused her for a while, and then had gradually become uninteresting, if not tiresome. Three of them had made her offers of marriage, which she had declined unconditionally, without one moment's hesitation. She was really not quite sure herself what qualities her future husband ought to possess to please her. A great name, a brilliant position, a large fortune, might have, if not conquered her, at least made her hesitate. None of the three suitors had possessed those qualifications, nor had Baldwin either a distinguished name or great riches to command particular favor. The natural simplicity of his manner "amused" her, and that was all she could say in his favor.

The only man of her acquaintance who occupied her thoughts was Forbes; and he did not owe this distinction to his wealth. She certainly thought of it sometimes, and imagined how pleasant it would be to surpass all her friends and acquaintances in splendor and extravagance, but what attracted her most was the aristocratic indifference of the young millionaire.

Now and then one meets in America with descendants of German or English immigrants in

whom every trace of their origin has been obliterated, after a few generations, by the influences of climate and a new mode of life. The typical features of their ancestors have completely disappeared. They have thin, small, refined features ; a peculiar, delicate complexion ; large, intelligent, bright eyes ; small, well-shaped hands and feet ; and long, slender limbs. Their bearing is bold and noble, their movements graceful and self-assured. They look more like the heirs of old and noble names than the descendants of square-shouldered, thick-set farmers and workmen, driven by want and misery from their old homes ; and not seldom one does learn with surprise that they themselves have in their youth carried on some trade or business, which in Europe is only followed by the lower and poorer classes.

Forbes was one of these, so to speak, unjustifiably aristocratic-looking men. His grandfather had been a poor farmer ; his father had dug his fortune out of the Californian mines ; yet the slenderly-built George Forbes moved about with remarkable dignity and gentlemanlike self-confidence. His great wealth threw a sort of artificial halo around him ; he rode and drove the handsomest horses ; he lost and won large sums at play with most perfect equanimity ; he never asked a service of anybody nor even the smallest favor ; he was no respecter of persons or of things ; he was polite and at the same time regardless of

others ; lastly, he knew how to dress plainly, but in perfect good taste. Jane saw all this, and admired it. In her heart she even over-estimated the value of the manifold advantages of her rich countryman, and at the same time she was conscious that her beautiful eyes exercised no great power over him, and that his serenity was not disturbed for one moment in her presence. She felt this more bitterly than any one had an idea of, far more than she liked to own to herself.

“If he were only not so rich,” she often thought, “I could show him at least that he pleases me more than the silly, tiresome men that surround me ; but I scarcely dare to be friendly with him lest he should fancy that I am thinking of his money, like those girls that flirt with him and those men that flatter him. If he could only lose a good part of his fortune, then he would find out who are his true friends.”

She treated Forbes with far greater reserve than her other acquaintances ; and for Baldwin, especially, she had always a pleasant smile and a friendly greeting. Forbes noticed this and laughed at it inwardly. “She wants to make me jealous of poor Baldwin,” he said to himself. The son of the gold-digger did not cherish many illusions ; he had no very exalted opinion of mankind in general, nor of Jane Leland in particular. He was not so easy to decoy and tame as the wild man of Yesso. On one occasion, when Forbes came home from his

club at one o'clock in the morning, having left Baldwin two hours before in Mrs. Leland's drawing-room, he noticed that there was still a light in his friend's room. He opened the door and found Baldwin walking up and down, apparently in deep thought.

"Why, what keeps you up so late?"

"Sit down," said Baldwin; "I want to speak to you."

"My advice is, don't."

"What?"

"Don't marry."

Baldwin looked up in surprise. "Who told you that I wished to marry?" he asked.

"Why, you yourself," replied Forbes, laughing. "Do you really think that it is a secret, for any one who knows you, that you are in love with Miss Leland?"

Baldwin remained silent for some time; at last he said: "You spare me the trouble of a preface and a confession. I am thankful for that. I may at once tell you what has taken place to-night. Soon after you left us, I unexpectedly found an opportunity of speaking alone to Miss Leland. Mr. Leland was at the whist-table, his wife was talking to some ladies, and Jane had remained alone in the little room where tea had been served. There I joined her. I do not know how it happened that I came to speak of my love, but, before I knew it myself, I had told her all I have carried

so long in my heart. At the very moment when I was expecting her answer, I heard the chairs move in the drawing-room ; the visitors were preparing to go. Jane rose quickly, and went into the next room. The guests took leave, and a few minutes later I found myself alone with Mr. and Mrs. Leland. Jane had disappeared. My heart was so full of what I had said to her, that I was determined to come to an understanding. I repeated in a few words what had taken place between Miss Leland and myself, and I begged them to grant me the hand of their daughter. Old Mr. Leland looked embarrassed, and said, ' You must settle that with my wife.' He then went to the whist-table, and busied himself in packing up the counters and cards. Mrs. Leland, who had remained by the fireplace, and did not ask me to sit down, made a long speech in an undertone, to this effect : she had heard from myself, as well as from you, that I intended to return to Japan, and she could not give her consent to a marriage which would separate her from her only child. I knew not what to answer. The whole affair assumed suddenly such a totally prosaic aspect that I became embarrassed, and I do not remember what I said in reply. While I was speaking to her, she looked at me in a cold, unsympathetic way. Old Leland was still busy putting away his cards, but I could not and would not consider myself beaten. Jane had not accepted my offer, but neither had

she refused it. I might still hope for the best. So at last I said to Mrs. Leland that I could not accept her answer as final; that I entreated her to speak to her daughter, and that I would take the liberty of calling to-morrow afternoon for an answer. I cannot tell how painful the hard, business-like tone in which this conversation was carried on appeared to me. Mrs. Leland said: 'I will speak to my daughter. Your visits will always be welcome, but I will never consent to separate from my only child in order to let her go to a part of the world where she would be as good as lost to me.' There followed a long pause, during which her eyes remained fixed on me with that same unfriendly expression. I could not fully realize my position. I felt as if I were in a dream. Everything seemed so strange, so entirely unexpected. I had gone to the Lelands that evening, as I had done for weeks past, in the hope of seeing Jane, but without any positive intention of declaring my love; and now I had spoken, and had not even received Jane's answer—now I was called upon, in this formal, business-like manner, as if it were a mere every-day question, to resign all the happiness I had hoped for! I felt that I could not collect my thoughts. I had just enough self-possession and judgment left to see that one inconsiderate word might hopelessly ruin my chances. I took my hat, and said, once more, 'Speak to your daughter, and allow me to call for

your decision to-morrow.' A few seconds later I found myself in the street, and for the last hour I have been here. You see I am cool, but still I don't know what to do. Help me, Forbes! What ought I to do? If Mrs. Leland repeats to-morrow what she said to-day, what then? Help me!"

Baldwin spoke quietly, but his eyes shone with a feverish light, his look was unsteady, and his voice sounded hoarse.

Forbes walked leisurely up to the fireplace, looked at the clock, admired himself in the looking-glass, and smoothed his beautiful, curly hair. Baldwin never took his eyes off him.

"Do you think," said Forbes, at last, very quietly, "that you have Miss Leland on your side?"

"How can I know?" replied Baldwin, impatiently; "have I not told you that she left me without giving me any answer?"

"Well, my dear friend, then I really don't know what to advise." He relighted his cigar, which had gone out, and then continued, slowly: "Wait till to-morrow; let us see what Mamma Leland has to say to you."

"But if she simply repeats what she said this evening?"

"Well, if I were you I would wait anyhow."

"Have you nothing else to say to me?"

"I really have not."

"Then I am no wiser than I was."

Forbes made no reply. Baldwin, who was

seated, remained staring into vacancy while he whistled softly to himself. At last he said, "Very well, I will wait till to-morrow." Then he passed his hand across his forehead and eyes, and said, "I am tired to death."

Forbes wished him good-night, and left the room. A quarter of an hour afterward he was lying in bed, reading the evening papers, as was his habit before going to sleep. After a very little while he dropped the paper on the floor, extinguished the light, and was soon sound asleep.

The next morning, Baldwin, who had passed a sleepless night, was sitting in his room, pale and down-hearted, when the following letter from Mr. Leland was brought to him. :

"AVENUE FRIEDLAND, *Monday Morning.*

"MY DEAR MR. BALDWIN : After you left us last night I had a long conversation with my wife and my daughter, and it is my duty to inform you of the decision we have come to. I regret sincerely that I cannot give you better news. Jane is our only child, and you will readily understand that we do not wish to separate from her. She is very grateful for the offer which you have made her ; she feels flattered by it ; but she will not oppose the expressed wish of her parents. Under these circumstances, it would be painful for yourself, as well as for us, were you to repeat your offer to-day, as was your intention last night. Our deci-

sion is irrevocable. I wish you well in every way with all my heart. I hope that in after-years we may meet again, and renew under different circumstances an acquaintance which has been very agreeable to me. My wife sends her best regards, and I remain, my dear Mr. Baldwin,

“Yours, very truly,

“FREDERICK LELAND.”

Baldwin, after reading the letter, sat for a long time motionless, and seemingly petrified. At twelve o'clock the servant came to announce breakfast, and to tell him that Mr. Forbes was waiting for him in the dining-room. Baldwin replied that he would come directly; but he forgot what he had said, and a quarter of an hour later Forbes himself came to find out what kept him in his room. Baldwin, without saying a word, handed him the letter, at which Forbes merely glanced.

“We will talk about this after breakfast,” he said. “Come down; it is half-past twelve.”

Baldwin followed his host, as if in a dream, and for half an hour he sat opposite to him at the table without speaking a word. Forbes had taken a long ride in the morning, and had an excellent appetite. After having satisfied his hunger, however, he was ready to listen to the love-affairs of his best friend.

“Give me that letter again,” he said, when he

was seated with Baldwin in the smoking-room ;
“I want to read it over carefully before I give you my opinion.”

He lighted a cigar very leisurely, threw himself into an easy-chair, put his legs up on another chair, and after making himself thoroughly comfortable, and having first examined for a moment with evident pleasure his small, well-made boots, he began to read.

“That letter has been dictated by Mamma Leland,” he said, when he had arrived at the signature. “The old gentleman would never have written it. I know his style. And she has taken pains to make it look awkward and natural. Her own little billets have a much finer finish. But the letter is not bad of its kind. The ‘*née* De Montemars’ has anticipated any new attack which you might attempt, and has defeated it beforehand.”

“Forbes, will you do me a favor?”

“With pleasure.”

“Go to Mrs. Leland ; speak a kind word for me.”

“But, my dear fellow, what could I say ? Father, mother, and daughter, unanimously reject your offer. Follow my advice, and let the matter drop.”

Baldwin looked at him in astonishment, but did not answer. Forbes felt that, in his desire to get rid of the whole affair, which did not interest him

very much, he had perhaps acted somewhat awkwardly ; so with some hesitation in tone and manner, like one who is trying to get out of a difficulty and hopes to find the way while he is speaking, he said : " Put yourself in that woman's place. After all, she is not so very much in the wrong. . . . She does not wish to separate from her. . . . If you had an only daughter, would you like her to go and live among the Ainos ? . . . Cannot you make a new offer on a different basis ? . . . Cannot you say you would remain in Europe ? . . . By that means perhaps everything might be pleasantly arranged. But go and plead your own cause. Don't take an outsider into your business. That might make an unfavorable impression. *Qui veut, va—qui ne veut pas, envoie !*"

" No, I must return to Japan," replied Baldwin ; " my interests would suffer too much, were I to remain here now."

" Well, then, make a sacrifice."

" If it were only that," exclaimed Baldwin, " I would willingly give every penny I have, if it would make Mrs. Leland change her mind. But as a poor man I could not presume to offer myself as a husband for Jane—"

He stopped suddenly, and walked up and down the room in deep thought. Then, speaking to himself rather than to his companion, he said :

“There is perhaps one way of arranging everything.”

“How?”

“If I could find somebody to buy a share of my business—which is really a sound and good one—”

He stopped again, casting a timid glance at Forbes.

“How could that be done?”

“I do not see my way quite clearly in the matter,” replied Baldwin; “I will think it over and talk to you about it this evening.”

“Yes, do,” replied Forbes, in a careless tone. Then he looked at his watch and said: “I have a few calls to make. I shall dine at seven o’clock at the Café Anglais; you can meet me there if you like. At any rate, I shall be home at about nine,” and he left the room.

“I see what you are after, Master Gordon Baldwin,” he said to himself, as soon as he was outside; “always the same old story.”

Baldwin had no idea of what was passing in Forbes’s mind. He worked the whole afternoon to draw up a statement of his financial position. He had some documents with him which enabled him to prove the correctness of his estimate by figures and facts. He could show that he possessed a fortune of nearly \$150,000. In order to arrive at this figure, he, however, thought himself justified in putting down his flourishing business

in Japan at a fair sum. He stated that any one who would take a share in the concern bringing \$50,000 with him would make a safe and profitable investment ; and under these conditions, he declared himself ready to accept his friend Graham, of Hakodate, into partnership. He was sure beforehand of Graham's consent. The \$50,000 with which Graham would join the firm would enable them to extend the business and found a branch establishment in Europe. The management of this European branch, Baldwin would undertake himself. These were the heads of the memorandum. In an accompanying letter, Baldwin asked Forbes to lend this \$50,000 to his friend Graham. As a further guarantee, he declared himself ready to mortgage his own and Graham's landed property in Hakodate for Forbes's security. Thus, the risk, to be incurred in granting the loan, would be reduced to a minimum. Baldwin worked hard for several hours to finish the statement and the letter. He had been much excited ; but as he read over his work when it was done, it satisfied him, and that calmed him a little. He had written with perfect honesty. He had not tried to represent his circumstances as better than they were. A stranger, indeed, might perhaps raise objections. But then Forbes was no stranger. Baldwin knew that Forbes possessed a large fortune, and took it for granted that he would be ready to render this service to him and to Gra-

ham, who was a friend of his youth. He looked at his watch and found that it was too late to go to the Café Anglais ; so he took a hasty dinner at a restaurant in the Champs-Élysées, and returned home directly.

Forbes was not punctual. It was nearly ten o'clock when he made his appearance. He said something by way of excuse, to which his friend paid no attention. He was evidently in a bad humor when he followed Baldwin into his room.

"Here !" said Baldwin, handing him the long, carefully-written statement ; "read this first."

Forbes did not take his hat off, and altogether looked like a man who has not much time to spare. He turned quickly over the closely-written pages, and soon came to the end of the memorandum, which had cost poor Baldwin hours of honest labor.

"I don't see yet, in the drift of this," he said, without lifting his eyes off the manuscript, "but I can point out at once one great mistake, which may fatally weaken the whole statement. I, too, am a man of business," he said, somewhat pettishly, as if answering some implied remark of Baldwin's, who had not said a word, and was only looking at him in anxious suspense. "You estimate your property at \$150,000. That cannot be correct to begin with, since you are willing to sell one-half for \$50,000, that is to say, with a loss of \$25,000. According to your

own calculations, therefore, you are worth only \$125,000. But even from that sum, Leland, who is a cautious man, would deduct one-half, as your money is invested in a business which may be good to-day and bad to-morrow. Again, you are ready, you say, to become joint security with Graham for the \$50,000 you wish to raise. But should you be unfortunate in your business—a contingency which certainly must be taken into account—you might be entirely ruined. This alone will induce old Leland to consider your statement as resting upon a very weak foundation, and consequently to reject it.”

He had assumed, while speaking, a certain look of superiority, as though he had discovered something very pleasant, and he repeated slowly, “Yes, reject it !” Then, after a short pause, he continued :

“But even supposing that Leland accepts all your calculations—which I know he will not—your statement will by no means satisfy him. I see you reckon upon a certain income of \$12,000. You mention this sum as a minimum. Now Leland will not suppose for a moment that you have undervalued your property, and he will set down that sum as a maximum. But, my dear fellow, what are \$12,000 a year for a spoiled girl like Jane Leland ? In her father’s house more than double that sum is spent, and they don’t consider themselves rich enough. With \$12,000, or about

£2,500, a year, you can't do much in Paris. For instance, you could not think of keeping your own horses and carriage. And imagine Jane Leland in a cab ! Impossible. Believe me, my dear Baldwin, it won't do ; better give it up."

"Here, read this," replied Baldwin, gloomily. He handed Forbes the letter in which he was asked to advance the \$50,000 to Graham.

Forbes looked at it for a moment.

"You think me richer than I am," he said. "I cannot raise \$50,000 so easily as you fancy. But even if I could, what would be the use? I tell you again, Leland is far too practical a man to accept your offer. Believe me, Baldwin, the best thing you can do is to give up the whole affair."

"Then you will not help me ?"

"I will help you with pleasure, if it is possible. I will see what I can do. But I can make no positive promise ; and I repeat again, I do not believe that my help would do you any good."

"What am I to do then ?"

"Well, how can I know ?"

"May I tell Leland that I think I can make arrangements to remain in Europe, if, on that condition, he will give me his daughter ?"

"Certainly, tell him that. That can do no harm. But—but, as I said before, I do not know yet whether I can get that money for you. I would have to borrow it. \$50,000 is a large sum

—a quarter of a million of francs—a very large sum. If you only knew how many claims are made on me—from all sides—”

Baldwin looked at Forbes with an expression so peculiar, so bitter, and at the same time so pitying, that the poor millionaire was suddenly silenced.

“Let us say no more about it,” said Baldwin, gently. “I have been mistaken !”

A feeling of shame and anger took possession of Forbes. He felt that at this moment Baldwin looked down upon him from a great height. But had he a right to do so? What did it all amount to? Always the same old story! He, Forbes, was to give money. Was he good for nothing else in this world than to pay—to help other people, strangers, out of their difficulties? Who ever had helped him? Nobody! He wanted nothing of Baldwin; what right had Baldwin to ask a favor of him? He had taken a liking to the stranger, because he seemed unselfish. But, after all, Baldwin was just like the other people with whom he had come in contact. Baldwin, like the rest, wanted to get something out of him. “I will not always let everybody make use of me, and get the better of me,” he said to himself. “The friendship of that man is not worth \$50,000; not a penny would I give for it if I had to pay for it. It was only of value as long as it was not venal.”

"You judge me unfairly," he said aloud ; "but it would be of no use to try and clear up this misunderstanding. Good-night, Baldwin."

"Good-night."

A few minutes later Baldwin heard the roll of the carriage which took Forbes to his club.

He played there as usual, but if possible with even less interest than was his wont. His reason furnished him with a hundred arguments to justify his conduct toward Baldwin, but his heart, cold as it was, told him he had acted meanly and ungenerously. No ! Baldwin was no common schemer who wanted to take advantage of him ! And by his side there stood another man, whose image Forbes could not drive away : a man with a prematurely aged face, with a sad look, and a sorrowful smile on his lips—Thomas. Baldwin, a perfect stranger, had shown kindness to him—"I owe it to Baldwin that I have not gone quite to ruin," Thomas had written to Forbes. This thought gnawed at the heart of the millionaire, and his conscience smote him.

"He shall have the money," he said to himself, suddenly. A genial feeling of warmth, which he had not known for years, filled his breast.

"*Va banque*," he said, aloud, and pushed a heap of gold and bank-notes into the middle of the table. He lost. The counting of the money took a long time. He waited impatiently, and had to pay a considerable sum ; then he rose and

drove home. He looked up at Baldwin's windows, and saw no light in them.

"He is gone to bed," thought Forbes. He went into his own room; he was excited, and it was long before he fell asleep. At a late hour the next morning his servant came into his room and brought him a letter. Forbes recognized Baldwin's handwriting; he tore open the envelope and read :

"DEAR FORBES : Accept my best thanks for the kindness with which you have received me. I have decided to go to London. Your servant tells me that you are still asleep, and I do not wish to disturb you. Very faithfully yours,

"GORDON BALDWIN."

IV.

FOUR years had gone by quickly. Baldwin was thirty-two and Forbes was not far from forty. Mrs. Leland had died; she had not seen the fulfillment of the great desire of her heart, the union of her daughter Jane with George Forbes.

Jane was still young and beautiful, but she was discontented and bitter at heart. This was shown in the thin, straight lips of her firmly-set mouth, in the sharp look of her brown eyes, and in the almost stern expression of her countenance.

Life with her had not kept its fair promise. The years of her first fresh youth had gone by. Her friends and companions, many of them less beautiful and less wealthy than herself, had married, and now held a position in society from which they seemed to look down upon her, whose superiority they had formerly acknowledged without difficulty. There had been numerous suitors for her hand during all these years—she had refused them all.

She knew why she had done so.

The only man who could make her heart beat faster, and whose homage would have flattered her—George Forbes—seemed not to care for her.

Quite imperceptibly the circle of her admirers had dwindled. She felt lonely since the death of her mother. She still was to be seen in the American colony of Paris, where her great beauty and wealth gave her a prominent position, but she seemed isolated there.

The young, unmarried girls were afraid of her sharp tongue, and the young men became embarrassed when they were subjected to the cold look of Jane Leland.

Sometimes George Forbes would sit down by her side. Then her eyes would brighten with a tender, reproachful expression, which remained unnoticed by the millionaire. He sat there perfectly cool and indifferent. And while Jane was looking at him to impress the image of the loved

face deeper and deeper into her heart, he would criticise with impertinent coolness the toilets of the guests, or make some sneering remark about the young people. He treated Jane like a contemporary, an old friend of many years' standing. Toward midnight, when every one was bright and cheerful, when the youthful faces were flushed with pleasure and excitement, he would rise with a hardly-suppressed yawn, to go to his club, to gamble there for an hour or two. He had changed but little during the last four years. There was still the same slight figure, and the elegant, handsome face, which was so familiar to the *habitués* of the boulevards, of the Bois de Boulogne, and of the *premières représentations*.

Forbes had felt the loss of Baldwin very much for some time, and had even gone to London in the hopes of finding him; had also written to him, but had received no answer. Then he had forgotten him. He had to think of many other things—of himself, in the first place. From time to time, at intervals which grew more and more distant, the remembrance of the “wild man” rose up in his heart. And then he felt ashamed and humiliated, and he would impatiently press his hand across his brow, as if to drive away a painful vision. Sometimes he would try to justify himself in his own eyes, and stifle the feeling of mortification. “Well, I have saved \$50,000, at any rate,” he would say to himself, but he knew

well enough that he did not believe it. He knew that the money that Baldwin had asked him to lend him would not have been lost, and that he had missed a rare opportunity in his monotonous, useless life to do a good deed to a good man. He had heard nothing more of Thomas Graham. "He may be dead, for aught I know," he said to himself. A gloomy feeling came over him at the thought that the last request which Thomas had made had not been granted, and that the kindness shown to him by Baldwin had not been repaid.

Baldwin had spent these four years in Japan. Fortune had smiled upon him, and he had become a rich man. Graham, his true and faithful friend, had been his partner for the last three years. Baldwin had asked him to go for a year to Europe, and give himself a good, long holiday; but the quiet, melancholy man had refused this very gently, but with great determination.

"Here, in Hakodate, I have at last found peace," he had said, "and here I will stay. I want nothing, I desire nothing more than what I have. Go to Europe yourself. I wish you from my heart all the happiness you can find at home; I hope all your wishes may be realized. As for me, I expect nothing more from the world out there, and I shall stay here."

Baldwin had told Graham what had taken place in Paris. He had also mentioned, but with-

out any bitterness, the mean behaviour of Forbes. Graham had turned pale when he had heard it.

“George is cold-hearted and suspicious,” he had said, “but I do not think him bad ; I am sorry that his distrust has misled him ; I would have forgiven him everything—all that I sometimes think I have to reproach him with—if he had done you a great service.”

Baldwin had noticed that any allusion to Forbes was painful to his friend. The recollections of Paris were sad for him also. The two friends, by tacit agreement, never spoke again of the unfortunate journey to Europe.

In time the remembrance of Jane grew fainter in Baldwin's heart. His love for her became quieter, colder, and so disappeared gradually. His anger against Forbes cooled down in like manner. The small-minded man, whom he had at first heartily despised, became an object of indifference. He thought of him but seldom, and without bitterness. Time destroys everything. In the last days of the year 186— Baldwin had said once more good-by to Graham, to make a new trip to Europe. Nothing had been definitely settled about his return to Japan.

“Remain at home as long as it pleases you,” Graham had said ; “I am happy at the thought that you will enjoy yourself there. You are too young to bury yourself out here, as I have done. If you care to remain in England or in France, let

no thought of me prevent you. I am content to stay some years longer in Japan. If at any time I should wish to get away from here, which is not at all likely, I shall know it in time to ask you to take my place for a while, or I will be able to put our business in such shape that it can be carried on without either your presence or mine. Do not trouble yourself about me, I shall get on very well alone. Enjoy yourself, and good-by !”

And now Baldwin was once more in Europe ; a quiet, serious man, older in heart and in looks than in years, but full of confidence, and inspiring it in others as before.

He had arrived at Marseilles a few days before, in a steamer of the *Messageries Impériales*, and had been in Paris a few hours. He had gone to a hotel in the Rue de la Paix, where he intended to stay a week before his departure for London. It was the month of March.

As soon as he had landed on French soil, Baldwin had felt a wish to see Paris again. He could not have explained what drew him there. He did not hope to see Jane again ; he did not even wish it. He had never inquired after her ; he thought she must be married long ago. For him she was lost—dead. But he wished to see again the place where his young, warm heart had dreamed a brief, beautiful dream ; he thought longingly of the place as of a spot where a beloved friend lies buried. A sorrowful memory of his younger days

drew him toward Paris. He slowly changed his dress and went to the *café* where he had dined years ago, on the day of his first arrival. The boulevards appeared to him strangely familiar. It was like the meeting of old friends. He recognized in the windows of the shops the same photographs which he had noticed four years before. It seemed to him that he had only been absent a few days. Everything was in the old place; nothing seemed changed—only himself; he had grown so different, so much older, so much poorer in hope, so much sadder.

He sat down at the same table where, years ago, he used to sit with Forbes, and lo! the same waiter, with apparently the same white apron, the same white necktie, the same patent-leather shoes, came to him and asked, in the well-known, indifferent tone, what monsieur would like to have for dinner.

“Give me a good dinner,” replied Baldwin.

The waiter stared slightly, and looked more closely at the sunburnt stranger with the white forehead. Something like a faint recollection passed over his sleek, pallid face, and glistened in his dark, cunning eyes. He went to order the dinner; then he returned and remained standing near Baldwin. Suddenly he went up close to him, and, leaning over the table with polite familiarity, he asked: “Does monsieur expect M. Forbes?”

Baldwin looked up with a smile and said :
“You have a good memory.”

“I never forget my customers,” replied the man, evidently flattered.

He went again to the kitchen, and when he returned to Baldwin he said : “I have changed the bill-of-fare a little. I remember monsieur likes highly-seasoned dishes. I have ordered a curried chicken.”

A few moments later, Forbes entered the room. The waiter went up to him and said : “Monsieur is expected.” Forbes looked toward the table which the waiter had pointed out, and a sudden, deep flush covered his face. He hesitated for a second, and then walked up to Baldwin. Baldwin rose from his seat, and for one short moment the two men faced each other in great embarrassment. Baldwin was the first to hold out his hand, which Forbes seized eagerly and pressed with great warmth.

“I am truly delighted to see you again,” he said. “I had no idea that you were in Paris. When did you arrive?”

“A few hours ago.”

“And where have you put up?” Baldwin gave him the name of his hotel.

The waiter had taken Forbes’s hat and overcoat, and was awaiting further orders.

“Give me the same dinner as Mr. Baldwin,” Forbes said, to get rid of the man. Then he sat

down, arranged his cover, and unfolded his napkin, to fill up a short pause. At last he bent forward, and, with greater warmth than was usual with him, said :

“There has been a misunderstanding between us, Baldwin. I am very sorry for it. I tried to find you after you had left me so suddenly, but did not succeed. I also wrote to you to the care of your banker in London ; but I received no answer.”

“Let by-gones be by-gones,” said Baldwin. “All that is forgotten long ago.”

“No, I must beg to be allowed to give an explanation. I give you my word that, on that same evening when I saw you, I had made up my mind to place the sum which you wanted at your disposal.”

“You came a little late with your friendly intention.”

“Yes, indeed, and I have often regretted it. I regret it to this day. Believe me, I would like to have been of service to you.”

“I believe you.” It was the same quiet, deep voice, which Forbes had liked to listen to years ago, and which had inspired him with confidence and affection ; but the faithful, honest eyes which were now looking at him, and whose steady light he could not endure, were no longer bright and full of light as formerly ; they had a serious, almost sad, expression now. A feeling of shame

and repentance, which he had never experienced before, filled the heart of the rich man. He would have liked to beg Baldwin's forgiveness ; he would willingly have given a much larger sum than that which he had refused to lend four years ago, if he could thereby have effaced his mistake.

"I regretted your sudden departure very much," he repeated.

"I believe you. Let the matter rest. Tell me what you are doing."

Forbes told him that the last four years had gone by in a dull, monotonous way, devoid of any interesting incident. Suddenly he interrupted the history of his own life to inquire after Graham.

"He has become my partner," replied Baldwin. "He is quite well. He is a good, honest man, and I have a great affection for him. I am only sorry that nothing seems to give him pleasure. He is always the same quiet, friendly, kind-hearted, and sad old fellow."

"When you write to him," said Forbes, after a pause, "tell him that I inquired after him, and that I am glad to hear good news of him."

"Why don't you write to him yourself? I am sure that a letter from you would give him pleasure."

Forbes did not answer ; and changing the conversation, he asked abruptly : "What did you say when you heard of Mrs. Leland's death?"

"I did not know that she was dead," replied

Baldwin, with surprise. "And how is Mr. Leland," he continued, with some embarrassment, "and Miss Leland?"

The old pain awoke in him with the recollection of the old time. But it was pain without bitterness. Jane, in his mind, belonged to a far-distant time, which, with its beautiful hopes, had gone by long ago.

"Mr. Leland is just the same," said Forbes. "Indeed, I think that his wife's death has made him younger. He is once more his own master, which had not been the case for the last thirty years. The death of that uncomfortable woman was no great loss for anybody.—As for Miss Leland, you will find her but little changed. Well, she is no longer a child—she must be twenty-seven years old, and the first bloom of youth is certainly gone. Girls grow old faster than married women. But Miss Leland is still remarkably handsome—the handsomest girl of the whole American colony, which can boast of many a loved face. It is strange that she is not married. There has been no lack of suitors, but she has refused them all."

Baldwin was struck dumb. A thousand thoughts rushed through his brain. Jane was still free. How was that? He had never received a refusal from herself. Her parents alone had spoken. Could it be possible that she loved him? Was it too late to ask her for a definite

answer? Should he try once more to seek his happiness where years ago he had hoped to find it? . . . And if she loved him? His heart beat faster at the very thought. . . . And if she did not love him? Well, that would be no new loss. The wound he had received four years ago was healed. He was able to think with equanimity of meeting Jane. He hoped, indeed, little; but he had nothing to fear. His feeling toward her could hardly be called love; it was rather a peculiar, intense curiosity. How would she behave when she saw him again? Would she be astonished, or joyfully moved, or indifferent? He wanted to be sure about it.

Forbes may perhaps have guessed what was going on in Baldwin's mind, for he asked: "Are you going to call on the Lelands?"

"I don't know yet," replied Baldwin, "but I think I would like to see them again."

"You may have that pleasure this very evening. Come with me to the opera; you will find Mr. and Miss Leland in my box."

Baldwin hesitated. "Shall I call for you?" urged Forbes, who was anxious to make himself agreeable to his former friend. "I can be in half an hour at your hotel—just in time for the opera: it is now nearly eight o'clock."

Baldwin consented, and they left the restaurant. When they entered Forbes's box, an hour later, it was empty; but after a few moments Mr.

Leland and Jane made their appearance. Jane recognized Baldwin at once, and started back with a little exclamation of surprise. But in a moment, and without any apparent effort, she recovered her self-possession. She had never cared for Baldwin. For years she had not thought of him. He was an acquaintance of former days, an old lover, whom she had rejected—nothing more. He had gone down in the stream of time, and had been forgotten without being even regretted. What was it to her that he had turned up again? She gave him calmly her small, gloved hand, nodded to him with a friendly smile, and passed on to take her seat in the front of the box.

Baldwin had to be introduced again to old Mr. Leland, but no sooner had he recollected the “young man from Japan” than he showed the most genuine pleasure in seeing him again. He inquired after his health and his circumstances, and testified his satisfaction at the prosperity of an old friend by exclaiming half a dozen times, “Delighted, delighted!” He insisted on making Baldwin sit in front next to his daughter, while he remained standing at the back of the box with Forbes, who had to tell him everything he knew about his newly-found friend. As to Baldwin, he was almost choked with emotion. He had well-nigh forgotten Jane during the last few years; but now the blissful confusion which he had always felt in her presence took hold of him again.

Jane appeared to him more beautiful than ever. She was dressed plainly, like a young girl, but in Baldwin's eyes she shone in her simple toilet like a queen. She looked carelessly round the house, to see if she recognized any acquaintances, and Baldwin could admire her without meeting her eyes. The outline of her features had become more sharply defined than before, and this gave still greater refinement to her beauty; her complexion was paler; and it seemed to Baldwin that her countenance wore an expression of gentle sadness, instead of the former proud consciousness of victory. For one short moment her eyes met his; he felt that he grew pale. Those eyes had lost the triumphant look of pride which once had beamed from them. They looked almost as if appealing for help. Jane was more beautiful than ever.

The curtain fell and put an end to Baldwin's mute, admiring contemplation. And now she turned to him and asked kindly how he had been, when he had left Japan, and whether he intended to remain in Europe.

Baldwin completely forgot that an hour before he had only been curious to see what impression their meeting would produce on Jane. She had been neither surprised, nor joyfully moved, nor indifferent. His inexperienced, large heart yearned toward her with all its might. A delightful pain, made up of mingled hope and sorrow, filled his

breast. It was with great difficulty he could retain his self-command. And Jane saw it all, as, with an enchanting smile and a kind, trustful expression, she looked up at him.

Baldwin went back with Forbes to his hotel after the theatre, silent and abstracted.

"You do not seem to hear what I am saying to you," remarked Forbes, with a smile.

"I beg your pardon," replied Baldwin, "I am a little tired from my journey. You asked me where we should dine to-morrow. I don't care. Wherever you like."

"Our old restaurant, then, at seven o'clock. Afterward, I go to the Sands' for an hour. Shall I introduce you? You may find some old friends there; at any rate you will meet the Lelands. Mrs. Sands is an old friend of mine. I can introduce you without any ceremony."

Baldwin accepted the offer and the two separated for the night. On his way home, Forbes debated with himself whether he should ask Baldwin to stay again in his house. But he feared a refusal, and without settling the question in his mind he went to bed and was soon fast asleep. Jane dreamed that night that Forbes at last had declared his love. Baldwin's fatigue had quite disappeared; for a long time he walked up and down his room in great excitement, and once more, as it had been four years ago, all his thoughts were with Jane Leland.

V.

BALDWIN met several old acquaintances at the Sands'. They invited him and he accepted their invitations, and thus it happened that, very soon after his arrival in Paris, he went every evening into society, and almost invariably met Jane. He had now been four weeks in Paris. He delayed his departure from day to day, and easily found new pretexts for remaining where he could see Jane.

Baldwin was a quiet man, full of sound common-sense. Life in foreign lands had given him a self-reliance and a determination of character which people who remain at home, surrounded by friends and relatives, seldom acquire in the same degree. But his heart, which for a long time had fed upon his first love in Paris, the heart of the Wild Man, as Forbes had called him, was still young and inexperienced as a child's. He loved with the strength of a man and with the ingenuousness of a boy, with all his heart and with all his soul. And Jane was no longer quite indifferent to the passion she inspired. She resented bitterly the loneliness in which she had lived latterly, and she missed the court of admirers which used to surround her. She had exercised mercilessly the privilege of refusing all offers, and she did not regret that she had done so ; but she was mortified

to notice that nobody seemed to seek her favor any more, and that she appeared to have lost that power over the hearts of men which she had used with so little pity. At times she felt really heavy-hearted, almost sentimental. Even cold, heartless people can sometimes pity themselves very sincerely. Could she not reach the goal which most of her companions had attained? Was she not more beautiful, richer, more intelligent than any of them? If she chose to employ the arts and manœuvres they had resorted to, she might triumph even now. But she would not. Her pride rebelled against the thought that she, the beautiful Jane Leland, should ask for love. If she had cared to do that, she might have conquered George Forbes's heart years ago. But she had always been proud and reserved, even to him. Nobody could know and nobody should even know what was passing in her breast—George Forbes least of all. She wanted to be loved, and then, by her own free will, to give her virgin heart as a priceless boon to him whom she could love in return. But now, none seemed to care for that precious gift, and here was Baldwin. She well knew how superior he was to the affected young dandies that surrounded him. How noble and fearless was the glance of those large, clear eyes! All other eyes quailed before them. How true and honest was the ring of that deep voice! How serious, calm, and dignified was his speech! But

the proud look softened when it met hers ; his voice sank to a tender whisper when he spoke to her ; and his words, which scarcely dared to hint at what filled his heart, told her with touching, bashful simplicity that he loved her, as she had never been loved before. Yes, Gordon Baldwin was a man ! She could rely upon him. Every drop of his life's blood belonged to her if she required it. She need not beg for his love, as for that of the cold, suspicious Forbes. No ; in Baldwin's eyes, her love was an invaluable treasure.

One evening, when Baldwin met Jane at the house of a common friend, he told her that he could not stay in Paris much longer, and that he would go to London in a few days.

"I hope you will soon return to Paris," she said.

"Perhaps," he replied ; and after a pause he added, in an undertone : " Will you allow me to see you to-morrow, to say good-by ? "

" Certainly ; with pleasure," she answered, smilingly.

" Miss Leland," began Baldwin. Then he stopped. She looked at him with some surprise, but kindly and encouragingly. " To-morrow, then," he added, " I will have the pleasure of calling on you at five o'clock."

A few minutes before the appointed hour, Baldwin entered the same room where, four years before, he had asked for Jane Leland's

hand. Mr. Leland had gone out, and Jane was alone. Miss Leland was an independent young lady, who even during her mother's lifetime had enjoyed a great deal of liberty, and who, having now been for more than a year perfectly uncontrolled by her father, could receive anybody she wished to see.

On his way from the hotel to the Avenue Friedland, Baldwin had tried to think of what he should say to Jane. He would at last declare his love—that was his settled purpose; but he could not determine in his own mind how to do it. He dared not picture to himself all that might happen. What if Jane refused him, as her mother had refused him years ago? How would he thank her if she accepted him? He shook his head, as if to drive away the confused thoughts which tormented him. He closed his eyes, so to speak, to all the possibilities of his case; and, half hopeful, half despairing, he went to meet his fate. It was a leap in the dark, and he would take it.

Jane was reading in the drawing-room when Baldwin entered. She took a few steps toward him and offered him her small, slender hand. He kept it in his own, and looked anxiously round the large room, like one who is seeking for help, or is in fear of danger. She sought gently to withdraw her hand, but he detained it firmly, and said :

“Miss Leland, years ago I stood before you as at this moment, to ask a question which you have never answered. Jane, trust yourself to me—Jane!” He looked at her imploringly, unable to utter a word. Infinite sadness, love, devotion, were in his eyes. Her heart beat faster. Why should she reject the great love which was now offered to her? Forbes! The image of the man she loved appeared for one short moment before her: the scornful mouth, the cold, criticising eyes, the proud, wearied face. Then the vision vanished, and she saw Baldwin—honest, earnest Baldwin—with his truthful face, in which everything lived, and everything spoke of love for her. She did not withdraw her hand. Her eyes dropped. She did not lean toward him, but he drew her gently to his heart, and she resisted no longer; and before she was aware, her head rested on his breast. She wept softly—over the great love which she inspired, over the happiness which at this moment she hoped for, confusedly but still sincerely; and over the sudden but now irrevocable loss of all the hopes of her heart. He kissed her pure brow, and said with emotion: “My whole life will bless you for the happiness which you give me.” He led her to the window, where, half unconscious, she sank in a chair. He was once more master of himself, and, although deeply moved, he was able to talk to her quietly. Would she tell her father what had taken place,

or should he do so? She did not answer. Did she think her father would object to their marriage?

"Oh, no," she said, in a scarcely audible whisper.

"Well, then, we have nothing more to fear. All will be well!"

"Yes, all will be well!"

But she could not look into his eyes. Only yesterday she had been the mistress, whose smile or frown could make Baldwin happy or miserable. And now she felt weak and disarmed. She had shot her last arrow. She had made her choice; her fate was sealed. It was very different from what she had hoped. She looked at Baldwin stealthily, as if she saw him for the first time. Could she be proud of him? He had nothing of that peculiarly aristocratic bearing which distinguished Forbes in her eyes; but he was a noble-looking man. She need not fear that the world would laugh at him or at her. Her friends would be astonished at her choice; after all she had not won a great prize. Had she been so fastidious and so exacting to give her hand at last to a man who had neither a great name nor a large fortune? If she had married Forbes, everybody would have thought her conduct natural. She would have waited long, but she would have won a great prize. But who was Gordon Baldwin? A man whom nobody knew,

for whom nobody cared. A sigh escaped her. She heard indistinctly, as in a dream, what Baldwin told her. He spoke of his life in Japan, since he had left her: how unhappy he had been; how he had thought he could kill his sorrow by work; how at last he had found rest, but no happiness. He spoke of the longing which had drawn him back to Paris, although he had arrived there without hope; of his surprise when he had learned from Forbes that all was not yet lost; of their meeting at the opera, where she had appeared to him so sad, so beautiful; of the revival of his love, which had never really been dead; and now of the indescribable happiness of knowing himself beloved!

She smiled sadly. Her heart was ready to burst. He could not know that it was full of despair for the loss of her once hoped-for happiness. The tear which fell on her pale, marble cheek, the sigh which made her bosom heave, the smile which glorified the beloved features, only told him that she loved him.

The large clock struck, slowly and loudly, seven. Baldwin looked up in astonishment. Two hours had gone by like a few minutes. She felt tired and wretched, like a beaten soldier fleeing from the enemy, and longing for darkness and solitude. He rose. She gave him her hand, but remained seated. He bent down, and kissed her once more on her forehead.

“Good-by, until we meet again this evening, my own, my beloved !”

“Until we meet again,” she repeated, mechanically.

And now, at last, she was alone. She remained motionless, in the same attitude, for a few minutes, looking straight before her. Then she rose, and slowly, noiselessly, as if in a dream, went up to her room.

This, then, was the end of her ambitions. She was to live and die Mrs. Gordon Baldwin. She did not repent of what she had done ; no, she felt a bitter, scornful joy as she thought of it. “Now Mr. Forbes will see, at last, that I did not care for his miserable money !”

Her greatest wish at this moment was that he should feel this, and that it should give him pain. “Will he, now that I am lost to him, regret that he never sought my love ?” She shook her head in despair. “I have never been anything to him !” Oh, how bitter, how bitter, was that thought ! Should she try once more her chances ? Her cheeks flushed, her eyes shone brightly. Should she write to Baldwin, and say that she had been mistaken, that she had deceived him, that she begged his forgiveness, and wanted to take back her promise ? Baldwin would do anything for her, she was quite sure of that.

She rose, and went slowly to her writing-table. But there she sank down in a chair, and, covering

her face with her hands, burst into tears. Of what use was her freedom to her? She had been free all these years, and Forbes had never looked upon her with love! No, thank God, she had not sunk so low as to beg for his love! She hated him! She was not going to mourn all her life for his sake! She would not give him the satisfaction of seeing her grow old in solitude. He had once said to her, "Baldwin is the best of men." He should see that the best of men was happy to devote himself entirely to her!

She bathed her face with cold water, to efface the trace of her tears. She had suddenly grown calm. The icy coldness of those who have lost all that was dearest to them, and who have conquered that loss, had taken possession of her. In a few minutes she had grown older. She had done with all the hopes, with all the dreams, of youth. She went to her glass, to arrange her hair. A pale face, with burning eyes, met her gaze. She nodded to the vision, with a gloomy smile. "Good-by, Jane Leland," she said. She went down into the drawing-room, where her father had been waiting for her to go to dinner.

The relations between Mr. Leland and his daughter were not of a kind to make Jane feel any embarrassment in telling him of what had taken place during the afternoon. She did this after dinner, in a calm, unconcerned manner.

"How do you like Mr. Baldwin?" she asked,

after she had poured out the coffee for her father, who was enjoying a cigar—a liberty which he would never have taken in the drawing-room during the life of Mrs. Leland, *née* De Montemars.

“A charming man, a very charming young man.”

“Would he be welcome to you as a son-in-law?”

“What—what do you say?”

Jane repeated the question. Old Leland nearly dropped the cup he was holding. He put it quickly on the table, and with a trembling hand he laid down his cigar; then he bent over to his daughter, and looked at her in mute astonishment.

“Mr. Baldwin asked me this afternoon to be his wife. He will ask for your consent this evening.”

“And I will give it him with all my heart; I would never have refused it. . . . My darling child, I am happy. . . . I am an old man. I may die any day. It has embittered these last years to think that I should have to leave you alone. Now I can live and die in peace. Baldwin is a good and noble man. I have always liked him, and have often regretted that your dear mother refused his offer. My dear Jane, my only child, my daughter!”

He embraced her affectionately; he was much more excited than she was: so much more that her coolness did not strike him. He begged her

to tell him how it all had happened; and she had already begun, in a very business-like manner, to do so, when the door opened and Mr. Baldwin was announced. Leland went joyfully to meet him, and with beaming face he pressed his hand and only said, "Welcome, my dear son ;" then he sat down trembling, incapable of uttering another word.

Baldwin was almost as moved as the old gentleman. Jane looked at them both almost contemptuously. She had fought her battle, she was tired and longing for rest. Why all this excitement? She listened with indifference to the plans which her father and her lover made for the future. She nodded or said "yes," when a look or a word asked for her consent. She was indifferent to everything. Sometimes it seemed to her that she was not at all concerned in what was going on before her. She was as if in a dream. Everything appeared to her dark and confused. Was it really her own future they were discussing? Could those two men dispose of *her*? Was she no longer free? Was Forbes lost to her forever? Once more the desperate resolution which had tempted her in her room recurred to her. Should she rise and call out: "Stop! You are mistaken! I have deceived you! I love another!" But then Forbes appeared before her, smiling scornfully. No! anything was better than to be sneered at by that man, perhaps to be pitied by him. And Baldwin

was a good, noble-hearted man. She would learn to love him. All might yet be well.

It was settled that the more intimate acquaintances should be informed of the engagement on the morrow, and that in two months' time—in July—the wedding should take place.

“Where shall we live? In Paris or in London?” asked Baldwin.

“Wherever you like,” was Jane's answer.

“In Paris,” interposed old Leland. “Nowhere in the world can a young married couple live as pleasantly as in Paris. Besides, I am accustomed to this life—and I would find it difficult at my age to adopt another. Then you have so many good old friends here—the Imgards, the Kellogs, the Sands, and Forbes and Hewitt, and many others.”

“Very well, let it be in Paris, then,” and this closed the conversation.

VI.

THE engagement between Gordon Baldwin and Miss Leland was for many days the principal topic of conversation among the American residents in Paris. The girls and the young married women talked about it very much in the spirit which Jane had foreseen. They were by no means jealous of her conquest, and there was a touch of sarcasm in their remarks. The young men were

indifferent. They had no claims on Jane and were inclined to consider the stranger from Yesso a bold man. They hoped he would have energy enough to tame the proud spirit of his bride. Some prophesied that he would follow in the steps of his father-in-law, who had been the model of obedient husbands. Others remarked that he did not look like a man who would consent to be led by any one, not even by an adored wife. The old ladies and gentlemen who had given up all idea of either Jane or Baldwin for their unmarried sons or daughters were perfectly satisfied with the arrangement.

George Forbes alone, though he had been aware of the growing affection of his former friend for Jane Leland, was astonished when he heard of the marriage. He had never made up his mind to ask her to be his wife. He did not love her ; but he could see that in beauty and in intellect she far surpassed all the other American girls of his acquaintance. Nor had it escaped his notice that he was not indifferent to Jane, although she had always treated him with great reserve. Men are as quick-sighted as women in this respect, and have a great liking for those whom they please. Forbes had said to himself more than once that, if ever he did marry, he would take Jane Leland. He thought of her as he would have thought of a precious work of art for his house, which he could only acquire at great cost, but which would give

him proportionate pleasure. "She would look well," he said to himself, "as the mistress of my house at a large dinner-party, or at a ball, or by my side in an open carriage." The thought had never struck him that he might not be able to secure this "precious thing," when he wanted it, any more than he doubted that he could buy any beautiful picture which he liked. The only question was to pay the price. Up to the present time Jane Leland had been a little too expensive for him. She was not worth the sacrifice, just yet, of the numerous enjoyments of a free bachelor life. But he had never quite given her up. In his mind she was "marked," as in a sale catalogue, as a desideratum, and he was only waiting for an opportunity for a favorable state of mind to conclude the bargain. He had never thought it possible that Jane could escape him ; he had never feared any of her numerous lovers, and Baldwin indeed less than two or three of those whom the proud beauty had refused. The "Wild Man" was a good, honest fellow, but that would be no great recommendation in the eyes of his practical countrywoman. He possessed a fair fortune, but according to Forbes's ideas he could not even be called rich. Why should Jane treat him differently from her other admirers ? And yet, so it was. Gordon Baldwin was her affianced *husband*, and she lost for him. At first he did not feel much grieved ; he only felt a peculiar, unpleasant rest-

lessness. He knew that henceforward something would be wanting in his life. Many things he had not thought of for a long time now struck him suddenly with unpleasant vividness. He noticed that he was no longer young, and that his acquaintances began to treat him like an old bachelor. When he went into society the lady of the house no longer asked him to dance; but the host inquired, in a friendly whisper, if he would take a hand at whist. He remembered that all his wealth had not purchased for him a single friend, and that this lone life, which had never oppressed him before, was after all very unsatisfactory. The remembrance of Thomas Graham, to whom for a long while he had not given a thought, arose in his mind. If they had been together, he would not feel so lonely. But between him and Thomas there was a great gulf. They could never meet again. He thought over all the marriageable girls of his acquaintance, but among them there was not one who could fill the place of Jane Leland. He felt angry with her. It appeared to him that she had treated him badly, unfairly. For years there had been a peculiar intimacy between them. She ought to have "given warning" when she meant to break it off. He had thought better of her than to suppose that she would throw herself away upon the first stranger she met. But it was now too late to complain; he had to make the best of it. He went to Baldwin's hotel and con-

gratulated him with apparently genuine pleasure ; thence he drove to the Avenue Friedland, and left his card, upon which he had written in pencil : "My best wishes." Then he went home and tried to persuade himself that nothing particular had happened. He yawned more than ever over the papers ; he found his dinner abominable, and declared to the waiter that he would not come again, if he were not better served. He thought the play that was played by the best actors of the Palais Royal terribly tedious and silly ; and he remained only a short time at the gambling-table. Contrary to his habit, he walked home from his club to enjoy the fresh air on the quay and to tire himself by exercise.

The broad, beautiful walk along the line from the Pont Royal to the Pont d'Iéna is in the evening almost deserted. Forbes could indulge in his thoughts undisturbed ; and for more than an hour he walked up and down. He was pleased with the lonely place, and from that evening he often found his way to it. A great change must have taken place when he, who had never been inclined to reverie, found pleasure in this quiet walk. But now he too had his dreams, just like other less cold-hearted people. He had found out that his life might have been better than it now promised to be, and that one cannot despise unselfish affection without suffering for it. To Thomas Graham, to Gordon Baldwin, to Jane Leland, he had been

something more than merely the "rich George Forbes ;" but in them too he had suspected selfish motives. And now it was too late to correct his mistake. "Too late !" He repeated that bitter word again and again. He knew well enough that Baldwin had never met him again with the old friendly confidence, and Jane could never be to him again what she had been. "After all," he said to himself, "I possess very little in this world, though I am a rich man."

Summer was come. Most of the friends of the Lelands had either left or were preparing to leave Paris, to go to some watering-place. Forbes too had made his plans for the summer, and would have been gone already, if he had had the heart to refuse Baldwin's invitation to the wedding. He generally found no difficulty in giving a refusal ; but in this instance he had accepted, not so much to please Baldwin as to avoid any appearance of being in any way vexed at the approaching marriage. Forbes and Jane acted their parts before the world so as to deceive everybody, except themselves. Forbes affected a friendly, unselfish desire to make himself agreeable, and offered many little services, which were intended to promote the future comfort of the young couple. Jane never showed greater satisfaction with her fate than when Forbes was present. But sometimes, when their eyes met, a look of bitter reproach passed between them. The young bride thought of it at

night, and enjoyed the triumph of knowing that Forbes repented, now that it was too late, of what he had done, or rather of what he had left undone ; and when Forbes, with his hand in his pocket, his head bowed in deep thought, walked up and down the lonely quay, he repeated to himself, with regretful pride, that, if it had been his pleasure, he might for years past have occupied that place by Jane's side for which Baldwin had to fight so hard.

Baldwin and old Mr. Leland were the best of friends, and perfectly happy. Not a shadow of suspicion troubled their contented minds. Jane had accepted Baldwin's offer. For those two simple-minded men, this was the best proof that she loved him. They did not know how to solve psychological problems, and suspected no secret. In her intercourse with Baldwin, Jane did not show that devotion and confidence which, in theory, he might have expected from his betrothed, but he thought that her coldness was only the result of maidenly reserve, and he admired her all the more for it. Old Leland was not very clear-sighted, and his wife had certainly not spoiled him by an over-measure of affection. He thought Jane's behavior to her husband in every way perfectly natural and becoming.

The two months' interval between the engagement and the wedding had quickly gone by, and at last the day came and passed like other days.

The marriage took place with great splendor. Many of Jane's friends had come from the country to see "the beautiful Miss Leland" on her wedding-day. She was, indeed, very beautiful on this occasion. It was noticed that she was very pale, and that her eyes remained so obstinately fixed on the ground during the ceremony, that not one of the wedding-guests could obtain a look at her. Only a few intimate friends were invited to the breakfast. Among these was George Forbes. His eyes sought again and again those of the bride. But not once did they meet. She saw nothing, and she would see nothing, of what was going on around her.

After the breakfast the young couple disappeared in that mysterious manner which fashion has prescribed, and were not seen for some months. Shortly after the wedding Forbes went to America, where, as he said, important business required his presence. Old Leland went to Trouville, where he met many of his friends, to whom he confided at intervals—say from eight to ten days—that he had the best news of the young couple, who were making a wedding-tour in Norway and Sweden, and were as happy as two lovers could be.

VII.

IN the beginning of the winter Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Baldwin returned from their wedding-trip. They took apartments in the Avenue de l'Impératrice, in the immediate neighborhood of Forbes's house. They led a very retired life, and only received George Forbes and a few of their most intimate friends. Nobody wondered at this, for the young people were in deep mourning. A few days before their return to Paris they had received news of the sudden illness, and almost immediately after of the death, of Mr. Leland. He had been a weak, kind-hearted old man, and he was sincerely regretted by all who knew him.

Mrs. Baldwin, his only child, inherited the whole of his large fortune, with the exception of some trifling legacies to distant relations and friends. His son-in-law, Mr. Gordon Baldwin, and "Mr. George Forbes, of New York, now resident in Paris, son of my late friend, Mr. Richard Forbes," were appointed executors.

One passage in Leland's will aroused Baldwin's attention, and was listened to by Forbes with visible embarrassment :

". . . . Further, a sum of ten thousand dollars to Mr. Thomas Lansdale, half-brother of Mr. George Forbes, son of the late Major Thomas Lansdale, of Baltimore, and of his wife, Maria,

who was married a second time to Mr. Richard Forbes, of San Francisco and New York. This sum is to be remitted to Thomas Lansdale, with the assurance that, under all circumstances, I have remained his true friend. . . .”

Baldwin looked in astonishment at Forbes, whose eyes were steadily fixed on the ground.

“I didn’t know you had a brother,” said Baldwin, half an hour later, when he was walking homeward with Forbes.

“We’ll talk about it another time,” said Forbes. “My brother’s story is not a very pleasant one ; I don’t feel inclined to speak about it to-day.”

Since his return from America, George Forbes had been habitually very little inclined to talk. He had always been very reserved in his manner, and since Jane’s marriage he had grown more and more so. His trip to America had not cheered him. His countrymen appeared to him rude and uncultivated. He thought the men conceited, full of unjustified pride ; the free and independent tone of the women in their intercourse with men displeased him still more. Formerly, it had been a pleasant pastime to laugh and joke with his pretty countrywomen ; now, their manner seemed to him forward and noisy. He only remained a month in the United States, and then returned to Europe.

The ten days’ voyage from New York to Liverpool seemed never to come to an end. He longed

for a storm to break the tediousness of the journey; but the heavens were blue and pure during the day, and the nights wonderfully bright with stars. The ocean lay around him in overwhelming, oppressive monotony, like a colossal mirror. He liked to sit in the stern of the ship, far away from the other passengers, and watch the white, dancing furrow of foam which followed the track of the fast-speeding vessel. He had no distinct sad thoughts—he did not always dwell upon the fact that he had lost every friend he had in this world. Only dimly, passing by as in a dream, arose before him the vision of Jane, Gordon, Thomas; a strange, dull uneasiness, like the presentiment of a great misfortune, weighed on his heart. “What ails me?” he asked himself, angrily. “Do I not possess everything to make me happy? I am rich, I am still young. Few men have the same advantages toward enjoying life as I! What is it that ails me?” He could not answer these questions. But his heart was heavy; the dark, gloomy thoughts would not go away. A barren past, a desolate future, a joyless existence—and a hopeless one.

The summer was not quite over when Forbes landed in Europe. London and Paris, where he remained a few days, seemed to him deserted and deadly wearisome. In Paris he remained a day longer than he originally intended, to examine, and finally to buy, a large picture which he had

accidentally seen in the shop of a picture-dealer. He had it immediately sent to his house, where it took the place of the beautiful, voluptuous Rubens which for many years had adorned his bedroom.

It was an ugly picture on which his eyes now feasted morning and night. It represented Seneca rising from his last bath, dripping with blood, with his dying lips uttering words of wisdom, which a weeping disciple is writing down. Beneath this hideous scene stood the words, "*Tædet tamdiu eadem fecisse.*"¹ Forbes had this phrase translated, and when he understood its meaning, his eyes lighted up, and he said in a tone of satisfaction and approval, "That is a good picture and a good maxim ;" and without haggling he paid an exorbitant price for the wretched daub.

Forbes went from Paris to several watering-places. Everywhere he found the same elegant dandies, the same over-dressed women, the same carriages and boats ; everywhere the same waiters, and coachmen, and boatmen. At the railway-stations he saw the same well-known porters ; at the hotels he was received by the same stereotyped head waiter with the same stereotyped bow, who, recognizing by his luggage and his servants the wealthy traveler, led him into the gaudy waiting-room with the pretentious furniture and velvet chairs and curtains. In the reading-room he found

¹ It is wearisome to be always doing the same things.

the same torn number of *Figaro*, the same *Times*, stained with coffee and tea spots, which he had seen at the last place. "It is, indeed, tiresome always to do, hear, and see the same thing," he said to himself.

He returned to Paris in the beginning of October. He went very little into society, and neglected his club altogether. But every evening, between the hours of ten and twelve, he could be found on the lonely quay along the Seine, where he walked slowly up and down with his head bent, and his hands folded behind him.

One evening, not long after the reading of Leland's will, he was met on his lonely walk by Gordon Baldwin.

"What are you doing here, at this hour of the night?" said Baldwin.

Forbes replied that a walk before he went to bed had almost become a necessity to him.

"There is not a quieter place in all Paris," he said; "after eleven o'clock you are as much alone here as if you were hundreds of miles away from the large city. And yet, you have only to take a few steps to be again in the midst of crowded, busy life. I like this contrast; it prepares me, as it were, for the solitude I find on my arrival home.—But this is no place for a newly-married man. What are you doing here this stormy night?"

Baldwin gave an evasive reply, and, rather for

the sake of turning the conversation than from curiosity, he said :

“You still owe me an answer to my question about your brother. Are you inclined to speak about it to-day? I do not wish to be indiscreet, but at any rate I must ask you to give me his address, as I have to write to him that my father-in-law left him ten thousand dollars.”

“You know Thomas Lansdale’s address as well as I do.”

“What do you mean?”

“Thomas Lansdale and Thomas Graham are one and the same person.”

Baldwin was astounded, but made no reply. He imagined that something very serious or painful must have occurred to induce his partner in Hakodate to assume another name, and to conceal from him the relationship existing between himself and Forbes. He did not care to learn the particulars. Whatever might have happened between the two brothers, Baldwin was perfectly sure that Graham, whom he had known now for eight years, was worthy of the confidence he placed in him.

“It is a sad story,” said Forbes, after a pause. He stopped again, and then continued in an indifferent tone: “My father and brother never agreed together. My father was a stern man ; Thomas, as I knew him, was wild and reckless. Violent scenes frequently took place between the two.

As long as my mother was alive she was the peace-maker; but shortly after her death, Thomas had to leave the house. He spent his money wildly, and incurred debts everywhere, not so much for himself as to assist a set of worthless impostors that surrounded him. But that was not the worst. He married, without my father's knowledge, a woman who deceived and betrayed the poor, credulous fool. She caused much misery. She died many years ago in want and wretchedness. The less that is said about her, the better. When my father heard of Thomas's marriage, he became very much enraged. He was a passionate man, who was not master of himself when he was angry. He went to Chicago, where my brother was living at the time, to force him to separate from his wife. Thomas worshiped the unworthy creature. My father's interference made him mad with rage. . . . It is a terrible story. . . ."

Forbes stopped for a moment. He had completely lost the composure with which he began. His trembling voice betrayed a deep inner emotion.

"You must recollect that no blood-relationship existed between Thomas and his step-father. . . . My father was a powerful man. Since his old Californian days, he had been in the habit of carrying a revolver. In Chicago, there was hardly a man at that time who went about unarmed. . . . My father was terribly provoked by Thomas

my brother ordered him to leave the house laid hands on him. . . . He was wounded by my father—God be thanked, not seriously, still he was wounded. The sad affair was hushed up; only a few intimate friends, old Leland among them, knew anything about it. Thomas recovered from his wound; his circumstances went from bad to worse; his wife dragged him lower and lower. Yet he would not consent to what we asked of him: separate from his wife. My father died without seeing him again, without forgiving him. Then Thomas addressed himself to me. What could I do? I could not wrong the memory of my father. He had done no injury. . . . Then I heard nothing of Thomas Lansdale for a long time, until five years ago you brought me the first news of him. . . . That is my brother's story!"

Baldwin remained silent when Forbes had finished his narrative.

"You think I have done wrong," said the suspicious man—"you think I have acted harshly?"

"I don't think I could have been angry so long with a brother," said Baldwin, in a serious tone. "Thomas Graham is a good man; everybody who knows him likes and respects him."

"He was not always so quiet and good; he was wild and reckless; more than ten times my father paid his debts."

"He is your brother!"

They had now arrived at a point where their

ways separated. Baldwin bade his companion good-night and walked quickly away.

Forbes went slowly home. His luxurious apartments seemed to him indescribably sad and lonely. He went to his study and took from a desk, where he kept his private papers, an envelope with an inscription in his own handwriting : "To be burned unread after my death. Letters from T. L." He read these letters. The stern features of his cold face became softer and sadder. Was it possible that he had not heeded these touching complaints and prayers, which now moved him so deeply? He put the letters aside with a heavy sigh, and sat for a long time in his chair without moving.

"He was my brother!" he whispered at length, repeating Baldwin's last reproachful words. "He was my brother—and strangers saved him from utter ruin." And now the past arose before him, vividly, as if it had only happened yesterday. He remembered the evening when Thomas had bidden him farewell in his bedroom, the evening when he had to leave the house, at his father's command. He saw him, as he stood before him with his pale face, his long, fair hair, his large, anxious blue eyes—the eyes of his dead mother. "George," he whispered, "you must not tell your father that I have been here. He forbade me to see you. But I could not go away without saying good-by to you, my brother. Good-by, George, don't forget me; think of me kindly." Then he had kissed him,

and Forbes felt the burning tears on his brother's cheeks ; and he strolled softly away. "He was my brother, my brother." Then, many years after, he saw Thomas again in a street in New York. He looked wretched and was shabbily dressed. It was a cold, wet evening. He wore an old, thin suit, in which he seemed to be cold. "For three days I have been watching for you. Oh, George ! hear me, save me, I am lost !" And he, Forbes, had had the courage to refuse him. "Have you separated from your wife ?" "She is ill, George, dying ; help me !" "Will you promise me to leave her ?" "George, help me ! help me !" How deeply these words, now after long years, cut into his heart ! And he had not helped. "And he was my brother !" Like a hideous nightmare it weighed upon his mind. A hopeless sadness shrouded him as in a dark, icy cloak. He might have had a brother, a friend, a beloved wife : Thomas, Gordon, Jane ! He had lost all ; lost forever ! And what had he left ? A large fortune. And what could he do with it ? Always the same thing : "Tædet tamdiu eadem fecisse."

VIII.

BALDWIN had turned the conversation quickly when Forbes alluded to his married life. It was a subject he did not like to talk about. His mar-

riage was not an unhappy one, but he had certainly not found the happiness which he had dreamed. Jane, as his wife, was as reserved and cold as she had been before her marriage. She was not ill-tempered or petulant, and gave him no ground for complaint; but he never heard her laugh, and she went about as if some secret sorrow crushed her down. Baldwin was very much distressed about this. By perfect frankness, by tender attentions, by touching devotion, he had tried to gain her affection, and he had failed. After a time his pride rebelled against giving his heart's love where he received in return nothing but cold politeness. Sometimes his blood would rise in anger when he clasped this creature to his heart, and he felt that no echo to his love came from her bosom. But he conquered this feeling, and only sighed as he dropped the delicate little hand which she had passively yielded to him, and now passively let fall.

Why was not Jane happy? Baldwin did all he could think of to give her pleasure. She did not seem to notice it. No expression of gratitude ever animated the beautiful face, no kind word passed those stern lips; her large, intelligent eyes looked apathetically upon everything that surrounded her. Baldwin was cast down, restless, unhappy.

“What is the matter with you, my dear Jane?” he asked, one evening, as they were sitting together before the fire. “Are you ill?”

"Nothing is the matter with me," she replied, languidly.

"You conceal something from me. What is it? I have only one supreme wish—to see you happy."

"Nothing is the matter," she repeated. She stared with wide-open eyes into the fire, and Baldwin saw two big tears roll down her pale cheeks.

He sat beside her, took her into his arms, and, with the tenderness of a mother trying to soothe a suffering child, he said: "Do speak to me, my beloved."

She pushed him gently away, and only replied: "I am a little tired. I don't know what is the matter with me. Let me be."

He looked at her anxiously. "I will call a doctor. You are ill."

She shook her head sadly; the tears came faster and faster, but not a word passed her lips.

"Will you not answer me?" he asked, once more, softly and tenderly.

"What can I answer?" she exclaimed, passionately. "Have you anything to reproach me with? Do I not obey every wish of yours? Do I ever complain? What more do you want? Don't torment me!"

He looked at her in astonishment. He left the room without saying another word. He could not remain in the house, he felt too unhappy. He

took his hat, and went into the fresh air to calm his excited nerves.

Baldwin was an intelligent, practical man, who had battled in his life with all sorts of difficulties. He knew they could not be overcome by sitting still and letting events take their own course. A great misfortune, an approaching danger, seemed to strengthen his intellectual powers, and increase his courage. He was able to perceive and examine, in one moment, every issue out of a difficulty, but he felt he was helpless against the griefs which now filled his heart. He walked for a long time up and down the dimly-lighted avenue, asking himself again and again how to remedy this unhappy state of affairs.

Meanwhile, Jane had not moved from her seat. She had dried her tears, and was still fixedly gazing into the fire.

For a short time, immediately after her marriage, she had made an attempt to like Baldwin. As she did not succeed immediately, she quickly gave it up, and now she disliked him. She thought him ill-bred, vulgar. His heavy step made her nervous, his loud voice made her tremble; the manifestations of his affection, which she dared not repel, were painful to her. "Why doesn't he leave me alone?" she asked herself bitterly; "why does he torment me with his love?" She had never in her life thought of anything but her own happiness and comfort.

Even when she made a feeble effort to like Baldwin, she had only considered her own interests. She had said to herself it would be pleasanter to live with a man whom she could love, than with one who was indifferent to her. The welfare of strangers gave her very little concern, and Baldwin was a stranger to her. He was her husband—so much the worse. She cursed the hour when, in a mood of vexation, despondency, and weakness, she had permitted him to take her into his arms. She had been short-sighted enough to believe in her love when, for a moment, her head had rested on his shoulder. Her love? He had no idea how she could love. Baldwin grew from day to day more disagreeable to her. She had to press her lips tightly together not to give vent to her feelings of displeasure when he noisily opened the door and entered the room ; she was shocked when he threw himself into an easy-chair. “Forbes was right to call him a savage ; he is one, and he ought to have married a savage,” she said to herself. What a difference between him and Forbes! But Forbes she longed to be able to hate. He was the cause of all her misery. One thing comforted her. She saw that Forbes was unhappy too. She would have liked to give him an enchanted potion, to instill into his breast the same dull, heavy misery that oppressed her heart. Yet she recognized his gentle, elastic step as soon as he approached her ; his soft, calm voice was

music in her ears. She reproached herself bitterly, not because in her heart she was unfaithful to her vow, but because her pride could not cure her of her love. "I wish he were dead, and I too, and all would be over."

A ring at the bell awoke her from her gloomy dreams. It was nine o'clock : who could it be ? She knew her husband always carried a latch-key.

"George Forbes !" she whispered. Since the death of her father, he was the only acquaintance who visited her in the evening. She had never been alone with him since her marriage ; she did not wish to be so. She rose quickly to leave the room : it was too late. The servant opened the door and announced Mr. Forbes.

On a table in the large room a lamp was burning, whose flame, subdued by a shade, only illuminated the space immediately surrounding the table ; outside of this narrow circle the room was wrapped in a soft, mysterious light.

Forbes sat down by Jane's side. He inquired after Baldwin. She told him he had gone out. Then the conversation stopped. The pause was painful. Jane tried in vain to say something. At last Forbes began. His voice sounded strange and husky.

"I am very happy to see you once more alone, as in the old times. I want to ask you for an explanation."

She did not answer ; she looked steadily into the fire.

“ Will you tell me,” he continued, “ what I have done to incur your displeasure ? ”

She did not raise her head, but looked at him sideways. Her face was in the shade ; he could not recognize her expression. He waited for a few seconds, and when he received no reply he continued :

“ We have been good friends for many years, at least I have always thought so. What have I done to forfeit your friendship ? Since your marriage you treat me like a stranger—worse than a stranger. I have tried to keep your kind opinion, tried to regain it, but I know only too well that I have not succeeded ; and, I assure you, it grieves me very much. My acquaintances think me cold, heartless. I care very little for their opinion. I owe this reputation merely to the fact that I have not allowed other people to dupe me. I confess it is not easy to gain my confidence. I am not in the habit of opening my heart to everybody. I think this is the first time in my life that I have ever spoken about myself ; and I wish you to know what I really am. As a rule, I am not friendly to confidential communications. My experience has taught me that people who took me into their secrets tried to borrow money from me immediately afterward. I am known to be suspicious in that respect, and not easily approached.

But just because I have so few friends, so very few, I set a high value upon the good-will of those in whose disinterested sincerity I have faith. Formerly I counted you among those few. Have I been mistaken? That would be a great misfortune. Greater than I dare tell you."

His voice had a subdued, gentle, affectionate tone, which Jane had never heard in it before. Her blood rushed through her veins like fire; her heart beat as if it would burst. How dared this man speak to her in this manner? He had despised her when she was free, when she would have willingly given herself to him. He was the cause of her misfortune; he had driven her to despair. What were his intentions now? Was he mocking her? was he laughing at her? or did he want to take advantage of her nameless misery to make her the object of his, of her own contempt?

She remained silent. She could only maintain an appearance of self-possession by not saying a word.

"Will you answer me, Mrs. Baldwin—Jane?" He bent over her; she felt his hot breath on her cheeks; he was going to take her hand.

She started from her seat as pale as death, raised her hand with a grand gesture, and pointed toward the door.

He rose, too, utterly confounded. "Madam," he muttered. Her flashing eyes looked at him

with such an expression of passionate wrath, of crushing contempt, that he could not say another word. Unutterably humiliated, he stole noiselessly to the door. She remained, like a statue, in the same magnificent, threatening posture, and only when the door had closed upon Forbes did she sink fainting into a chair.

Forbes rushed down the avenue like a madman. Not far from Baldwin's house he crossed a tall man, who turned and looked at him in astonishment, and then slowly continued his way.

"Has Forbes been here?" asked Baldwin, when he entered the room a few moments later.

Jane, still seated before the fire, with her back turned toward him, did not answer. He looked at her. She was sitting with half-closed eyes and white lips, as if she were dead. He took her into his strong arms and carried her, as though she had been a child, into her bedroom. He had often seen people sick and dying, and he did not for a moment lose his self-possession. He saw at once that she was in a fainting-fit, and by means of a few simple remedies he succeeded in reviving her. She opened her eyes and looked at him strangely.

"Wretch!" she murmured.

"What has happened?" asked Baldwin, anxiously.

She recognized him, shut her eyes again, and turned her face, as if she wished to go to sleep.

Gordon remained by her side for some time without speaking ; at last he asked her once more what had happened. She answered in a scarcely audible voice :

“I am tired—I want to sleep; let me rest now.”

In face of this real or pretended weakness he felt absolutely helpless. He called her servant, and, giving her a few directions, left the room. Anger, suspicion, jealousy tormented his heart. He had met Forbes in the street rushing past like a madman ; immediately after he had found his wife at home in a swoon. What had taken place between the two ? He was determined to know it, and at once. His wife would not or could not answer. Forbes must speak without delay.

It was a mild March evening ; the house-door was open ; the *concierge* was standing on the sidewalk before the next house talking to a neighbor. Baldwin left the house without being seen. He walked quickly to Forbes's apartments ; every window was dark. Baldwin continued his way, and in a few minutes reached the quay. It was completely deserted, not a soul to be seen. At Baldwin's right the dark waters of the Seine, swollen by spring rains, rushed swiftly toward the sea. Numberless lights from the opposite bank were reflected in fantastic, zigzag lines ; to the left rose the old trees of the Cours de la Reine, spreading around their deep shade. From the distance resounded the dull, incessant rolling of

carriages. When Baldwin was about half-way between the Pont d'Iéna and the Pont des Invalides, he saw close before him the figure of a man leaning over the low stone wall which separates the quay from the river. Baldwin recognized the man he was seeking. Forbes, roused by the quick, heavy step, lifted his head, and the two men stood face to face. A street-lamp shed a pale light over them. Forbes was deadly white. Baldwin, excited by the quick walk and the storm that raged within him, stood before him with burning face and flashing eyes.

"What have you done in my house?" he asked. He spoke almost in a whisper, but with an ominous trembling in his voice.

Forbes looked at him in confusion, unable to utter a word.

"What have you done in my house?" Baldwin repeated, louder.—A short pause.—"Will you answer me? Forbes! do you hear me? Answer me!"

"You are too excited now to listen to me," said Forbes, at last. "Come into my house; I can explain everything."

"I will not cross the threshold of your door again. You shall answer me now! here! at once!"

Involuntarily Forbes stepped back. Baldwin seized him by the shoulders: "You shall not escape me! Answer me! Answer!"

Baldwin was a powerful man. His passion gave him the strength of a giant. He shook Forbes like a light, lifeless thing. "Answer me!" he cried once more, in a furious rage.

For about the tenth part of a second Baldwin saw before him a deadly-pale, fast-receding face, out of which a pair of large black eyes stared at him with maddened terror. Then he saw that Forbes, whom he had pushed violently away, stumbled. He saw him fall backward against the sharp edge of the low stone wall, and break down with an awful groan; he heard his head strike with a heavy thud against the stones—then all was still. Forbes was lying on the sidewalk, and Baldwin bending anxiously over the convulsed face.

"Forbes!"

No answer.

The eyes of the dying man opened once more in the last agony. A short rattling in his throat—a convulsive stretching and moving of the limbs—then all at once perfect, motionless repose . . . the repose of death. . . .

Baldwin looked around wildly. For two or three seconds he stood irresolute. Then his cool, clear common-sense, which had never deserted him in the hour of danger, recognized the dangerous position. He heard the rolling of a heavy carriage, and at a distance of not more than a hundred yards he perceived the red light of an

omnibus. With a few leaps he was on the opposite side of the quay, under the shade of the trees.

The omnibus passed without stopping ; but now two persons approached from the Pont des Invalides. It was so quiet that he could hear every word they said.

“What’s this?” said one of them, stooping down over Forbes.

“A drunken man.”

“Go and call a policeman ; I’ll wait here. This man is dead.”

One of the men ran away in the direction of the Place de la Concorde. Baldwin took the opposite direction ; and walking as fast as he could, he soon reached his home. The *concierge* was still in the street, smoking his short pipe and walking up and down in front of the open door. Baldwin succeeded in entering the house without attracting attention. He crept softly up-stairs, and managed to get into his room without being seen by anybody. He quickly threw off his overcoat and hat, took a newspaper, and sat down before the fire. And now, having done everything to wipe off his track all signs of the fatal deed, he began to reflect over what had taken place.

A thousand thoughts pressed upon him, but not in wild confusion. He reviewed the events in their logical order. Forbes had insulted his wife. She meant him, and nobody else, when she exclaimed, “Wretch !” He, Baldwin, was fully

justified in demanding an explanation. His wife had refused it; he had asked it of Forbes. He wanted to force Forbes to speak; he grew angry; but even in his wrath he had never had any intention of killing him. It was by accident that Forbes stumbled and fell. But he was dead. Who now could bear witness to his innocence? If he denounced himself as the immediate cause of this involuntary homicide, he would be subject to the verdict of strange, suspicious judges, who would take his truthful statement of the circumstances for lies and prevarication, who would treat him like a common criminal. Why should he expose himself to such a risk? His conscience reproached him with nothing. Should he give himself up? Should he step forward and say, "That man has been slain by my hand?" Should he expose his fair name to malicious comments and suspicions? No! He would not. On the contrary, he would do everything in his power to avert such undeserved misfortune.

He recalled all the circumstances that immediately preceded and followed the fatal event. Nobody had seen him leaving and returning to the house: he had not been absent for more than half an hour. It was impossible that suspicion should fall upon him. "Nobody can know what I have done," he said to himself, having considered every detail over and over again, "and nobody shall know it, if I can help it."

At this moment he heard a violent ringing of the bell and immediately loud talking in the ante-chamber. His attentive ear caught repeatedly the name of Forbes. He moved his lamp so that his face was in the shade, and sat for a few seconds in breathless expectation. The door of his room was suddenly opened, and Forbes's old servant entered.

"What's the matter?" asked Baldwin, quietly.

"My master has been brought home dead. He has been murdered."

With an easily-feigned surprise, Baldwin sprang from his chair and followed the messenger of woe. After a few minutes' quick walking they reached the house. The door was open and guarded by two policemen. Baldwin was shown into the bedroom. There on the bed lay the partly undressed body of the dead man. Three persons, who were introduced to him as the doctor, a police-officer, and his assistant, stood beside the corpse. The officer, at whose request Baldwin had been called in, told him in a few words what had happened. Two gentlemen, accompanied by a *sergent de ville*, had come to his office about three-quarters of an hour ago, and told him that they had found on the quay the body of a dead man. The corpse had been quickly identified by the name and address which was found in a pocket-book upon the deceased. The officer wished to know whether Mr. Baldwin, who had been named by the servant

as the most intimate friend of the unfortunate gentleman, could give any clew to this mysterious affair.

“No ; none whatever.”

“When did you see Mr. Forbes the last time?”

“A few hours ago. When I came home about nine o’clock, I met him near my house, where he had been to see me.”

“What did he say to you?”

“He did not speak to me. He did not recognize me in the dark, and walked quickly past me. I had seen him and spoken to him during the day. I had nothing particular to say to him and did not stop him.”

“Did he leave any message for you?”

“No, my servant would have told me if he had.”

“To whom did he speak in your house?”

“To my wife.”

“What did he say to her?”

“I can’t tell. I found my wife a little unwell when I came home, and, attending to her, I forgot to inquire after Mr. Forbes. He was a frequent guest at my house. There was nothing extraordinary in his visit.”

Baldwin became aware that the conversation took the form of a judicial examination. He was very cautious in his answers. He resolved to reply frankly to every question, and only conceal what nobody but himself could know. He did not

contradict himself once. The officer, who was far from suspecting him, finally closed the conversation by telling him that he, his wife, and the servant who had opened the door for Forbes, would be summoned to-morrow to appear before a police-magistrate. Baldwin turned to the doctor to ask what had been the immediate cause of Mr. Forbes's death. He listened patiently to the physician's learned discourse; he showed no repugnance on looking at the corpse; his whole moral energy was concentrated for the moment upon not doing, saying, or revealing anything that might betray him. Everything else was of secondary consideration. When he was alone, he would think over all that happened. He must above all escape, unsuspected, from the presence of the vigilant, suspicious police-officer. He felt indistinctly that he could not calculate at this moment all the bearings of his deed, that mischief threatened him as the natural consequence, that blood must be cleansed by blood. All these thoughts overwhelmed him, as yet confused, formless, mere phantoms of his heated imagination. But he fought against them; all he had to do just now was to cover his retreat. He heard the officer tell his assistant that two policemen were to remain in the house, until everything had been sealed up. Then he turned again to Baldwin and asked him if he knew where the deceased was in the habit of keeping his money and other valuables. Baldwin pointed to a small safe-box, where he had

seen Forbes put money and papers of importance. The box was opened and found to contain a considerable sum in bank-notes and gold. While the officer was counting the money, Baldwin noticed a sealed envelope. He took it out and read :

“Gordon Baldwin, Esq., Paris. To be opened after my death.”

“This letter may contain some important information or instructions,” said Baldwin to the officer. “Will you allow me to open it at once ?”

The officer consented, and Baldwin read as follows :

“PARIS, *February* 26, 186—.

“MY DEAR BALDWIN : I have decided to put an end to my life, and when you read this letter I shall have carried out my purpose.”

Baldwin uttered a cry of astonishment, and read these lines to the officer.

“That is very strange ; according to the doctor’s opinion, I would not have believed in your friend’s suicide.”

Baldwin continued : “I tell you this in order to put a stop beforehand to all false theories and inquiries about the cause of my death, and to beg you to suppress at once all unnecessary noise and trouble. I have never been partial to sensations, and my only desire is to leave this life as quietly and unnoticed as possible. I have taken every precaution to facilitate the carrying out of my

last wishes as far as possible. My will is deposited at the American Consulate, and drawn up in such a way that it cannot be disputed.

“The reason why I kill myself is very simple: I am weary of life. You may not consider this a great misfortune. You can have no idea how unbearable this weariness may become in time. ‘*Tædet tamdiu eadem fecisse.*’ This is the only Latin phrase I know and understand. It is tiresome to have always done the same thing, to know that as long as I live I shall always have to do the same thing, and that this one thing is very stale and unprofitable.

“I have often regretted that, years ago, I did not render you the service you asked me for. I beg you to forgive me. See that Thomas forgives me too. I have never consciously done any wrong to your wife. Ask her to think kindly of me from time to time.

“After having said good-by to you, to your wife, and to my brother, I have reached the end of the list of those for whom I cared in this world. How poor I am—I, the rich man! You, Baldwin, were my best friend—and how little of a friend were you! Thomas was my only brother: he has been dead to me for years, and I to him. Jane Leland—is your wife! A woman who has married another; a brother who is lost; a friend who does not care for me—that was all that I had in this life. It was really not enough.

“I feel at this moment neither excited nor sad. A deep calm such as I have not known for a long time fills my breast. The thought that I can shake off the burden of life as soon as I please gives me new courage. A quarter of an hour ago, when I sat down to write this letter, it was my intention to kill myself to-night. Now, when I know I shall kill myself ; when all preparations for the last act of my life are finished ; when I can carry out my wish whenever I like—now I feel fresh courage to experiment for a few days more. Perhaps something new may happen. I can wait quietly. I have nothing to hope, nothing to fear. Satiated even to nausea, hopeless, I stand but one step removed from eternity—and now I have taken that step.

“GEORGE FORBES.”

During the reading of this letter, the officer had sealed up the money. Then he put on his gloves with great deliberation, remarked that it had grown late, and, having given his assistant all necessary instructions, left the house with Baldwin. He took his leave at the door, turned up his coat-collar, put his hands in his pocket, and trotted toward his home.

Baldwin went down the Avenue de l'Impératrice. He stopped thoughtfully for a few moments in front of his house ; then he rang the bell and entered.

IX.

FORBES'S last instructions were faithfully carried out. He was buried very quietly. The Parisian newspapers, with great discretion, only gave a very short account of the tragic affair. The inquiries of the police failed to bring to light any new fact. The doctors would not accept the idea of suicide. On the other hand, it was difficult to believe in a crime, as a considerable sum of money was found upon the deceased, and nobody knew of Forbes having any enemy capable of such a deed.

Baldwin's servant testified that on the fatal evening Mr. Forbes had made a short call on Mrs. Baldwin, about nine o'clock. He had noticed nothing strange in his manner. Mrs. Baldwin said that, having told Forbes her husband was out, he had not staid long. She had noticed nothing peculiar in him. According to the evidence of the two gentlemen who had found the body, it was beyond a doubt that Forbes had died between 10 and 10.15 p. m. Where he spent the last hour of his life remained a mystery. Finally a policeman testified that about 10 o'clock he had seen an open carriage, whether a private carriage or a cab he could not tell, going down the quay at a furious rate. The doctor, the police, and the magistrate came to the unanimous conclu-

sion that Forbes must have been in that carriage; and that, fearing the horses were running away, he had jumped out, and thus found his death. This explanation satisfied everybody, all further inquiries were discontinued, and the whole affair was soon as good as forgotten; only between Gordon Baldwin and his wife it had arisen like a gloomy spectre.

Baldwin noticed that whenever he was alone with his wife her looks followed him, anxiously and suspiciously, at every step. Even the shallow appearance of mutual confidence which had existed formerly now disappeared. They lived together in a sullen, silent mood, both with a secret and a suspicion in their hearts. He dared not ask her what had happened in her last interview with Forbes. The words choked him whenever he tried to pronounce the name of the man who had fallen by his hand; his old cheerfulness was gone; he felt that he could never regain it; that henceforth, bowed down by a heavy burden, he would lead a miserable life until he found rest in the grave. A feeling he had never known before, fear, overcame him. If his secret should come out? If the dark deed should be brought to light? He shuddered at the very thought. He would leave Paris, would seek occupation; hard work would tire him, would give him rest and sleep, which he had not known since that fatal night. He longed to go back to Yesso, among the sim-

ple-minded islanders, who liked and confided in him ; who knew nothing of what had happened in Paris ; who never would know it. He would escape the searching, hostile glances of his wife, which followed and tormented him. He had never in his life cast down his eyes before anybody, and now he dared not look into his wife's face. He could bear it no longer.

Immediately after Forbes's death, Baldwin had written to Thomas, to inform him of the sudden death of his brother, and to ask him to take possession of the large fortune which he had left him. Now he resolved to go to Hakodate to assume the management of their business in Graham's absence. He feared Thomas as much as his wife ; he pictured to himself the meeting with his old friend. Could he dare to look at him when he told him the story of his brother's death ? In his mind's eye he saw Graham's glance affectionately and trustfully seeking his own. Could he lie to those honest eyes ? He trembled at the very thought. No ! ten times rather Jane's suspicion than Graham's confidence. He decided to return to Hakodate at once. In that case he was almost certain to avoid his friend, who, on receiving the news of his brother's death, would no doubt start immediately for Europe to take possession of the large fortune which Forbes had left him.

He waited until it was dark ; he felt ashamed of taking such precautions, but he was forced to

do so. When the lamp was on the table he seated himself with his back to the light, and said to Jane, who was sitting opposite to him, pale, silent, and cold :

“Thomas Lansdale will no doubt leave Hako-date immediately on receipt of my letter. One of us should be there to look after our interests. I shall shortly return to Japan. Will you go with me, or do you prefer staying here?”

She answered his question by another.

“You are going to leave Paris?”

“I must.”

“I thought so.”

He tried to appear surprised, and asked :

“What makes you think so?”

She shrugged her shoulders contemptuously.

“What makes you think so?” he repeated with a great effort.

“Do not ask me, you know what I mean.”

Her voice had a peculiar, tormenting sound. He felt humiliated, but did not dare to ask for an explanation. He repeated his former question :
“Will you come with me to Japan?”

“No. I expect in a few days a letter from my aunt Alice. I have made up my mind to live with her for the future.”

And had it come to this? She knew he had no further power over her and would not dare to exercise his rights.

“I do not understand you,” he said, gently,

“and I will not prevent you from doing what you like. I only know that, since I have known you, I have had but one wish : to make you happy.”

He said these last words with indescribable sadness, and felt that his eyes filled with tears. How had he deserved this dreadful misery? If anybody was guilty, it was Jane, whose coldness had aroused his suspicion, and whose half-unconscious exclamation about Forbes had excited his wrath. The idea that an injury had been done to his wife had made him furious. She above all should forgive, should comfort him, and she was the one to torment him most. He covered his face with his hands and wept. Since Forbes's death he was a changed man; he had grown weak and irritable ; his old energy had left him. Jane saw his tears and his sufferings, yet she was not moved. She sat opposite him as cold and motionless as marble, her suspicious eyes fixed upon him. At last he rose and said gently :

“You are hard and unjust, but I will not complain. The day may come when you will find that you have misjudged me, when you will regret that you have rejected my love. Then call me and I will hasten to you. Now I will go.”

He left the room slowly. She looked after him without saying a word, but her mute lips moved and breathed the word “Murderer !”

Baldwin was sure that he had not betrayed himself before his wife. She could know nothing of

the bloody deed, but she imagined it. He felt that his rest was gone, even if she had not suspected him. Her undeserved confidence would not have been less intolerable than her suspicion. Only one thing could have reconciled him to his fate : to have confessed all to his wife, to have had her recognize his innocence, pity his misfortune, and bear it with him—then he would have found comfort and peace in her presence. But Jane's eyes repelled all approaches. He had to carry alone the burden of his secret, unbearable as it was.

During the following day, Baldwin settled all his affairs in Paris, and prepared for his departure without interruption from Jane either by word or look. She saw him come and go as if she had been deaf and dumb. On the evening of the second day after their last interview, he came to her room to say good-by. He had dreaded this moment, but it passed quickly. His heart was so full that he hardly noticed her coldness. She did not offer her hand ; when he bent forward to embrace her, she stepped back.

“Farewell, Jane,” he said, and in a beseeching tone he added : “I hope we shall meet again.”

She nodded her head in silence. He lingered for a moment ; and when he saw that her icy features never relaxed, he left the room. It would have been better for him to have stood before the sternest judge than before this woman, who had

never loved him, who saw in him the cause of all her misfortune, who hated and dreaded him. On that evening when she was lying on her bed, with her nerves morbidly excited, she heard him leave the house and return. She knew that, at the time of Forbes's death, he had been in the street. The fact that he concealed this circumstance made her suspicious; his despondency strengthened this impression. Their last interview, when he, the strong man, had wept in her presence, made her absolutely sure. "He is a murderer," she said. But she would not step forth as his accuser. She, too, had a secret to keep. It was best guarded as long as she was silent. A few days after Baldwin's departure, Jane's aunt, Mademoiselle Alice de Montemars, arrived in Paris. This lady was a shrewd old maid. She saw at once that she would secure a comfortable life for the rest of her days if she got on the right side of her rich niece. She spared no pains to make herself as agreeable and useful as possible; and a few weeks after Baldwin had left, she succeeded in persuading Jane to follow her to the south of France, and settle in a fashionable watering-place on the Mediterranean.

X.

BALDWIN had arrived in San Francisco, and there awaited the departure of the Pacific Mail steamer. He intended to go to Yokohama, where he would soon find an opportunity of proceeding to Hakodate. In New York and San Francisco, he inquired after Thomas Graham and Thomas Lansdale—he did not know under which name his friend was traveling—but he could learn nothing about him. “He must have gone by way of Suez,” said Baldwin to himself. “All the better ; now I am sure of not meeting him.”

His heart was heavy when he thought that henceforth he must shun the society of the two persons he loved best, Jane and Thomas. But he felt calmer and more courageous since he had left his wife. He knew she was well provided for. If she had loved him, she would have followed him. But this was not the case. She had never loved him. She had been false when she gave him her hand, when she swore to be true to him until death, to love and cherish him “for better for worse.” His misfortune should not have estranged her. He had cause to be angry with her ; she had nothing to reproach him with ; he had not sinned against her. It was a kind of sad comfort to him to be able to accuse Jane in his heart, and to feel that he had done her no wrong. His account with her

was settled in his favor. He was her creditor and he forgave her her debt.—It was different with Thomas. He had sinned against him. He did not dare to look him in the face, at least not now; perhaps, in years to come, he might. It was well that Thomas had gone to Europe by another route, a meeting was now impossible.

Baldwin left San Francisco on the first of July, and arrived in Yokohama on the twenty-second. The three weeks on the great ocean had worked like soothing balm on his wounded heart. Though he was not able to cherish one cheerful thought, that gnawing anxiety which had tormented him in Paris had forsaken him.

In Yokohama he was met by many old friends, who asked him what was the matter, what had turned his hair so gray. He replied that he had been ill, and quickly turned the conversation. He inquired after Graham. They had been without news from Hakodate for two months. He was told that the steamer Ozaka would leave in a few days for Hakodate, and bring back letters from there.

The captain of the Ozaka agreed to take Gordon as passenger; and on the third of August he arrived at his destination.

When the ship entered the harbor, numerous small boats with Chinese and European merchants rowed alongside, to receive letters and news from Yokohama. Baldwin recognized his own house-

boat carrying a young Englishman of the name of Howell, who for many years had been book-keeper in his office. A few minutes later, Baldwin met him on the gangway. Howell was astonished to see his employer before him unexpectedly. He shook hands with him, and asked whether Mr. Baldwin had been ill. Baldwin gave him the same answer as he had given his friends in Yokohama, and asked when Mr. Graham had left Hakodate.

“Mr. Graham is in Hakodate; you’ll see him in a quarter of an hour. A few weeks ago he received a letter from you, and decided to go to Europe; but he changed his mind. He has written to you twice since; you must have crossed his letters.”

Howell busied himself with looking after his employer’s luggage. Baldwin had a few moments’ time to collect his thoughts. The meeting with Graham was now unavoidable. He could do nothing but abide the course of events. When he reached the quay, he was greeted by several Japanese, among whom he had lived for so many years. All asked him the same question: “Have you been ill, Mr. Baldwin?”

Graham sat reading in his room when Baldwin entered. He sprung from his chair with a cry of joy when the door opened and Gordon’s well-known voice called out: “How do you do, Thomas?” But he stepped back almost immediately, and exclaimed:

“Baldwin, some misfortune has happened to you ! for God’s sake, tell me what it is !”

Baldwin felt something in his throat which prevented him from answering at once. At last he said :

“I have had a bitter experience since I left you, but we will talk about that by-and-by. How do you happen to be here ? I thought you were on your way to Europe, and came to fill your place.”

Thomas could not take his eyes off Baldwin. He looked at him with the tenderness of a mother whose child has been brought home ill.

“Gordon, what is the matter ?” he asked, beseechingly. “I cannot be quiet until I know.”

He took Baldwin’s hand between both his own, and looked at him steadily. It was the old, confiding look of which Baldwin had been afraid !

“I have been obliged to separate from my wife,” he said, at last, in a low tone.

“My poor friend !”

A long pause. Baldwin covered his face with both hands.

“My poor friend !” repeated Thomas.

All at once Baldwin felt that, in order to exonerate himself, he must expose his wife’s name to suspicion. No, that must not be ! That unfortunate night had cost him all his happiness. He did not complain. The blood that was shed must be expiated, but his honor, his self-respect,

should not be sacrificed. He would not commit an act of cowardice, and throw the burden of his misfortune upon his wife. He sat down and asked, softly :

“Thomas, are you my friend?”

“That I am. I have nobody in this world but you. You may confide everything to me that burdens your heart, and I will do all, all I can, to help you”—he paused for a moment, and added, solemnly—“so help me God!”

Before the window of the room where the two men were sitting spread the broad harbor of Hakodate. Heavy junks, with brown, square sails, and numberless fishing-boats, tossed on the dark-blue, white-crested waves. Baldwin looked at this grand picture, and, without taking his eyes off the open window, in a toneless voice, he told his friend the whole history of his misfortune. He did not accuse Forbes, he did not even know whether he had been guilty, nor did he attempt to excuse himself. He had been excited and angry. He had pushed Forbes away, and Forbes had fallen. “I bent over him and saw him die. I see him before me, at this moment, dying, killed by my hand.” He stopped, for the first time, and looked anxiously into his friend’s face. Graham sat before him, pale as death, his eyes riveted upon the ground. “Nobody but you knows what has happened,” continued Baldwin. “I owed a confession to nobody but you. I have given myself

and my secret into your hands; do with me as you like. If I am guilty, I will endure any punishment you may think fit; if I am innocent, then acquit me, and deliver me from the torments I can bear no longer. I have suffered unspeakable misery. Look at me, Thomas; see what has become of me! Have pity on me!"

A long pause.

"I have nobody in this world but you," said Thomas, at last. In his eyes shone the old, full confidence, the old affection.

Baldwin could look at him again. As with Jane, his debtor, he had now settled his account with Graham, his creditor, and his debt was forgiven. He drew a long breath. He was again a free man.

XI.

JANE lives alternately in the south of France and in Paris, a rich young widow. She has become very pious, with that cold piety which makes people renowned in society, and dreaded in the narrower circle of their friends. Her house is kept in exemplary order; her servants tremble before her, though she never scolds. No poor man dares to approach her; but the name of Mrs. Gordon Baldwin heads with large sums every subscription list for charitable purposes. Her gener-

osity is as free from vanity as it is from charity. She makes large donations to schools, hospitals, asylums, and such institutions, not because she wishes to be mentioned or praised, but because she thinks it is her duty to do good, and that this can only be done by placing large sums at the disposal of professional philanthropists. It is impossible for her to take an interest in individual suffering. She can only think of her own, and in order to lessen this she is systematically benevolent. She is not bad ; she has never done anything actually wrong, nor ever one single unselfish, kind action. She cannot sympathize with strangers ; Nature has denied this quality. She certainly cannot be admired nor blamed. Kind-hearted people, of whom there are some in this word, will pity her.

Thomas Lansdale is settled in New York. Hundreds of poor bless his name. No one who is in want of help leaves his door unrelieved. The last misfortune that befell him, Gordon Baldwin's death, has made the tender-hearted man still more benevolent. He often gives to those who are unworthy, but continues to do good to the best of his judgment. Suspicion finds no place in his heart. It is better to be deceived by many and to do good to many than to suspect all and to stand alone.

Gordon Baldwin met with a hero's death soon after his return to Hakodate. To save the crew

of a stranding vessel from certain death, he swam through a raging sea to the shore, carrying a line. He was dashed against a rock and frightfully crushed. He lived for six hours, long enough to know that he had not given his life in vain, that the crew of the ship had been saved; long enough to know that Forbes's blood had been expiated and atoned for. The members of the foreign community surrounded the house during his agony. The believers prayed for him fervently; the unbelievers wept bitterly. Thomas Lansdale closed his eyes. His kind, affectionate glance, which Baldwin once had feared, was the last consolation of the dying man.

And now they are all well off. Forbes and Baldwin are dead and at peace. Two people, Jane and Thomas, think of them, and know that with them is buried all that belonged to their life and happiness, and that they can never be replaced; otherwise it is as if they had never lived. Thomas has never overcome the grief of Gordon's death; but he is not unhappy. He is deceived, imposed upon, even laughed at by some; by many he is honored and loved. Jane lives retired, alone in a lofty solitude, and is in a fair way to gain the reputation of a saint.

THE END.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S PENDULUM.

I.

DURING many long years Hermann Fabricius had lost sight of his friend Henry Warren, and had forgotten him.

Yet when students together they had loved each other dearly, and more than once they had sworn eternal friendship. This was at a period which, though not very remote, we seem to have left far behind us—a time when young men still believed in eternal friendship, and could feel enthusiasm for great deeds or great ideas. Youth in the present day is, or thinks itself, more rational. Hermann and Warren in those days were simple-minded and ingenuous ; and not only in the moment of elation, when they had sworn to be friends forever, but even the next day, and the day after that, in sober earnestness, they had vowed that nothing should separate them, and that they would remain united through life. The

delusion had not lasted long. The pitiless machinery of life had caught up the young men as soon as they left the university, and had thrown one to the right, the other to the left. For a few months they had exchanged long and frequent letters ; then they had met once, and finally they had parted, each going his way. Their letters had become more scarce, more brief, and at last had ceased altogether. It would really seem that the fact of having interests in common is the one thing sufficiently powerful to prolong and keep up the life of epistolary relations. A man may feel great affection for an absent friend, and yet not find time to write him ten lines, while he will willingly expend daily many hours on a stranger from whom he expects something. None the less he may be a true and honest friend. Man is naturally selfish ; the instinct of self-preservation requires it of him. Provided he be not wicked, and that he show himself ready to serve his neighbor—after himself—no one has a right to complain, or to accuse him of hard-heartedness.

At the time this story begins, Hermann had even forgotten whether he had written to Warren last, or whether he had left his friend's last letter unanswered. In a word, the correspondence which began so enthusiastically had entirely ceased. Hermann lived in a large town, and had acquired some reputation as a writer. From time to time, in the course of his walks, he would meet

a young student with brown hair, and mild, honest-looking blue eyes, whose countenance, with its frank and youthful smile, inspired confidence and invited the sympathy of the passer-by. Whenever Hermann met this young man, he would say to himself, "How like Henry at twenty!" and for a few minutes memory would travel back to the already distant days of youth, and he would long to see his dear old Warren again. More than once, on the spur of the moment, he had resolved to try and find out what had become of his old university comrade. But these good intentions were never followed up. On reaching home he would find his table covered with books and pamphlets to be reviewed, and letters from publishers or newspaper editors asking for "copy"—to say nothing of invitations to dinner, which must be accepted or refused; in a word, he found so much *urgent* business to dispatch that the evening would go by, and weariness would overtake him, before he could make time for inquiring about his old friend.

In the course of years, the life of most men becomes so regulated that no time is left for anything beyond "necessary work." But, indeed, the man who lives only for his own pleasure—doing, so to speak, nothing—is rarely better in this respect than the writer, the banker, and the *savant*, who are overburdened with work.

One afternoon, as Hermann, according to his

custom, was returning home about five o'clock, his porter handed him a letter bearing the American post-mark. He examined it closely before opening it. The large and rather stiff handwriting on the address seemed familiar, and yet he could not say to whom it belonged. Suddenly his countenance brightened, and he exclaimed, "A letter from Henry!" He tore open the envelope, and read as follows:

"MY DEAR HERMANN: It is fortunate that one of us, at least, should have attained celebrity. I saw your name on the outside of a book of which you are the author. I wrote at once to the publisher; that obliging man answered me by return of post, and, thanks to these circumstances, I am enabled to tell you that I will land at Hamburg toward the end of September. Write to me there, *Poste Restante*, and let me know if you are willing to receive me for a few days. I can take Leipsic on my way home, and would do so most willingly if you say that you would see me again with pleasure.—Your old friend,

"HENRY WARREN."

Below the signature there was a postscript of a single line: "This is my present face." And from an inner envelope Hermann drew a small photograph, which he carried to the window to examine leisurely. As he looked, a painful im-

pression of sadness came over him. The portrait was that of an old man. Long gray hair fell in disorder over a careworn brow ; the eyes, deep sunk in their sockets, had a strange and disquieting look of fixity ; and the mouth, surrounded by deep furrows, seemed to tell its own long tale of sorrow.

“Poor Henry !” said Hermann ; “this, then, is your present face ! And yet he is not old ; he is younger than I am ; he can scarcely be thirty-eight. Can I, too, be already an old man ?”

He walked up to the glass, and looked attentively at the reflection of his own face. No ! those were not the features of a man whose life was near its close ; the eye was bright, and the complexion indicated vigor and health. Still, it was not a young face. Thought and care had traced their furrows round the mouth and about the temples, and the general expression was one of melancholy, not to say despondency.

“Well, well, we have grown old,” said Hermann, with a sigh. “I had not thought about it this long while ; and now this photograph has reminded me of it painfully.” Then he took up his pen and wrote to say how happy he would be to see his old friend again as soon as possible.

The next day, chance brought him face to face in the street with the young student who was so like Warren. “Who knows ?” thought Hermann ; “fifteen or twenty years hence this young man

may look no brighter than Warren does to-day. Ah, life is not easy ! It has a way of saddening joyous looks, and imparting severity to smiling lips. As for me, I have no real right to complain of my life. I have lived pretty much like everybody ; a little satisfaction, and then a little disappointment, turn by turn ; and often small worries : and so my youth has gone by, I scarcely know how."

On the 2d of October Hermann received a telegram from Hamburg, announcing the arrival of Warren for the same evening. At the appointed hour he went to the railway-station to meet his friend. He saw him get down from the carriage slowly, and rather heavily, and he watched him for a few seconds before accosting him. Warren appeared to him old and broken-down, and even more feeble than he had expected to see him from his portrait. He wore a traveling-suit of gray cloth, so loose and wide that it hung in folds on the gaunt and stooping figure ; a large wide-awake hat was drawn down to his very eyes. The newcomer looked right and left, seeking no doubt to discover his friend—not seeing him, he turned his weary and languid steps toward the way out. Hermann then came forward. Warren recognized him at once ; a sunny, youthful smile lighted up his countenance, and, evidently much moved, he stretched out his hand. An hour later, the two friends were seated opposite each other

before a well-spread table in Hermann's comfortable apartments.

Warren ate very little ; but, on the other hand, Hermann noticed, with surprise and some anxiety, that his friend, who had been formerly a model of sobriety, drank a good deal. Wine, however, seemed to have no effect on him. The pale face did not flush ; there was the same cold, fixed look in the eye ; and his speech, though slow and dull in tone, betrayed no embarrassment.

When the servant who had waited at dinner had taken away the dessert and brought in coffee, Hermann wheeled two big arm-chairs close to the fire, and said to his friend :

"Now, we will not be interrupted. Light a cigar, make yourself at home, and tell me all you have been doing since we parted."

Warren pushed away the cigars. "If you do not mind," said he, "I will smoke my pipe. I am used to it, and I prefer it to the best of cigars."

So saying, he drew from its well-worn case an old pipe, whose color showed it had been long used, and filled it methodically with moist, blackish tobacco. Then he lighted it, and, after sending forth one or two loud puffs of smoke, he said, with an air of sovereign satisfaction :

"A quiet, comfortable room—a friend—a good pipe after dinner—and no care for the morrow. That's what I like."

Hermann cast a sidelong glance at his compan-

ion, and was painfully struck at his appearance. The tall, gaunt frame in its stooping attitude ; the grayish hair, and sad, fixed look ; the thin legs, crossed one over the other ; the elbow resting on the knee and supporting the chin—in a word, the whole strange figure, as it sat there—bore no resemblance to Henry Warren, the friend of his youth. This man was a stranger—a mysterious being, even. Nevertheless, the affection he felt for his friend was not impaired ; on the contrary, pity entered into his heart. “How ill the world must have used him,” thought Hermann, “to have thus disfigured him !” Then he said aloud :

“Now, then, let me have your story, unless you prefer to hear mine first.”

He strove to speak lightly, but he felt that the effort was not successful. As to Warren, he went on smoking quietly, without saying a word. The long silence at last became painful. Hermann began to feel an uncomfortable sensation of distress in presence of the strange guest he had brought to his home. After a few minutes he ventured to ask for the third time, “Will you make up your mind to speak, or must I begin ?”

Warren gave vent to a little, noiseless laugh. “I am thinking how I can answer your question. The difficulty is that, to speak truly, I have absolutely nothing to tell. I wonder now—and it was that made me pause—how it has happened that, throughout my life, I have been bored by—noth-

ing. As if it would not have been quite as natural, quite as easy, and far pleasanter, to have been amused by that same nothing—which has been my life. The fact is, my dear fellow, that I have had no deep sorrow to bear, neither have I been happy. I have not been extraordinarily successful, and have drawn none of the prizes of life. But I am well aware that, in this respect, my lot resembles that of thousands of other men. I have always been obliged to work. I have earned my bread by the sweat of my brow. I have had money difficulties ; I have even had a hopeless passion—but what then?—every one has had that. Besides, that was in by-gone days ; I have learned to bear it, and to forget. What pains and angers me is, to have to confess that my life has been spent without satisfaction and without happiness.”

He paused an instant, and then resumed, more calmly : “ A few years ago I was foolish enough to believe that things might in the end turn out better. I was a professor, with a very moderate salary, at the school at Elmira. I taught all I knew, and much that I had to learn in order to be able to teach it—Greek and Latin, German and French, mathematics and physical sciences. During the so-called play-hours I even gave music-lessons. In the course of the whole day there were few moments of liberty for me. I was perpetually surrounded by a crowd of rough, ill-bred boys, whose only object during lessons was to catch me making

a fault in English. When evening came, I was quite worn out ; still, I could always find time to dream for half an hour or so with my eyes open before going to bed. Then all my desires were accomplished, and I was supremely happy. At last I had drawn a prize ! I was successful in everything ; I was rich, honored, powerful—what more can I say ? I astonished the world—or, rather, I astonished Ellen Gilmore, who, for me, was the whole world. Hermann, have you ever been as mad ? Have you, too, in a waking dream, been in turn a statesman, a millionaire, the author of a sublime work, a victorious general, the head of a great political party ? Have you dreamed nonsense such as that ? I, who am here, have been all I say—in dreamland. Never mind, that was a good time. Ellen Gilmore, whom I have just mentioned, was the elder sister of one of my pupils, Francis Gilmore, the most undisciplined boy of the school. His parents, nevertheless, insisted on his learning something ; and as I had the reputation of possessing unwearying patience, I was selected to give him private lessons. That was how I obtained a footing in the Gilmore family. Later on, when they had found out that I was somewhat of a musician—you may remember, perhaps, that for an amateur I was a tolerable performer on the piano—I went every day to the house to teach Latin and Greek to Francis and music to Ellen.

“Now, picture to yourself the situation, and then laugh at your friend as he has laughed at himself many a time. On the one side—the Gilmore side—a large fortune and no lack of pride ; an intelligent, shrewd, and practical father ; an ambitious and vain mother ; an affectionate but spoiled boy ; and a girl of nineteen, surpassingly lovely, with a cultivated mind and great good sense. On the other hand, you have Henry Warren, aged twenty-nine ; in his dreams the author of a famous work, or the commander-in-chief of the Northern armies, or, it may be, President of the Republic—in reality, professor at Elmira College, with a modest stipend of seventy dollars a month. Was it not evident that the absurdity of my position as a suitor for Ellen would strike me at once ? Of course it did. In my lucid moments, when I was not dreaming, I was a very rational man, who had read a good deal, and learned not a little ; and it would have been sheer madness in me to have indulged for an instant the hope of a marriage between Ellen and myself. I knew it was an utter impossibility—as impossible as to be elected President of the United States ; and yet, in spite of myself, I dreamed of it. However, I must do myself the justice to add that my passion inconvenienced nobody. I would no more have spoken of it than of my imaginary command of the Army of the Potomac. The pleasures which my love afforded me could give umbrage to no

one. Yet I am convinced that Ellen read my secret. Not that she ever said a word to me on the subject ; no look or syllable of hers could have made me suspect that she had guessed the state of my mind.

“One single incident I remember which was not in accordance with her habitual reserve in this respect. I noticed one day that her eyes were red. Of course, I dared not ask her why she had cried. During the lesson she seemed absent ; and when leaving she said, without looking at me : ‘I may, perhaps, be obliged to interrupt our lessons for some little time ; I am very sorry. I wish you every happiness.’ Then, without raising her eyes, she quickly left the room. I was bewildered. What could her words mean ? And why had they been said in such an affectionate tone ?

“The next day Francis Gilmore called to inform me, with his father’s compliments, that he was to have four days’ holidays, because his sister had just been betrothed to Mr. Howard, a wealthy New York merchant, and that, for the occasion, there would be great festivities at home.

“Thenceforward there was an end of the dreams which up to that moment had made life pleasant. In sober reason I had no more cause to deplore Ellen’s marriage than to feel aggrieved because Grant had succeeded Johnson as President. Nevertheless, you can scarcely conceive how much this affair—I mean the marriage—grieved me.

My absolute nothingness suddenly stared me in the face. I saw myself as I was—a mere school-master, with no motive for pride in the past, or pleasure in the present, or hope in the future.”

Warren's pipe had gone out while he was telling his story. He cleaned it out methodically, drew from his pocket a cake of Cavendish tobacco, and, after cutting off with a penknife the necessary quantity, refilled his pipe and lit it. The way in which he performed all these little operations betrayed long habit. He had ceased to speak while he was relighting his pipe, and kept on whistling between his teeth. Hermann looked on silently. After a few minutes, and when the pipe was in good order, Warren resumed his story :

“For a few weeks I was terribly miserable ; not so much because I had lost Ellen—a man cannot lose what he has never hoped to possess—as from the ruin of all my illusions. During those days I plucked and ate by the dozen of the fruits of the tree of self-knowledge, and I found them very bitter. I ended by leaving Elmira, to seek my fortunes elsewhere. I knew my trade well. Long practice had taught me how to make the best of my learning, and I never had any difficulty in finding employment. I taught successively in upward of a dozen States of the Union. I can scarcely recollect the names of all the places where I have lived—Sacramento, Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Boston, New York ; I have

been everywhere—everywhere. And everywhere I have met with the same rude schoolboys, just as I have found the same regular and irregular verbs in Latin and Greek. If you would see a man thoroughly satiated and saturated with schoolboys and classical grammars, look at me.

“In the leisure time which, whatever might be my work, I still contrived to make for myself, I indulged in philosophical reflections. Then it was I took the habit of smoking so much.”

Warren stopped suddenly, and, looking straight before him, appeared plunged in thought. Then, passing his hand over his forehead, he repeated, in an absent manner: “Yes, of smoking so much. I also took another habit,” he added, somewhat hastily—“but that has nothing to do with my story. The theory which especially occupied my thoughts was that of the oscillations of an ideal instrument of my own imagining, to which, in my own mind, I gave the name of the *Philosopher's Pendulum*. To this invention I owe the quietude of mind which has supported me for many years, and which, as you see, I now enjoy. I said to myself that my great sorrow—if I may so call it without presumption—had arisen merely from my wish to be extraordinarily happy. When, in his dreams, a man has carried presumption so far as to attain to the heights of celebrity, or to being the husband of Ellen Gilmore, there was nothing wonderful, if, on awaking, he sustained a

heavy fall before reaching the depths of reality. Had I been less ambitious in my desires, their realization would have been easier, or, at any rate, the disappointment would have been less bitter. Starting from this principle, I arrived at the logical conclusion that the best means to avoid being unhappy is to wish for as little happiness as possible. This truth was discovered by my philosophical forefathers many centuries before the birth of Christ, and I lay no claim to being the finder of it; but the outward symbol which I ended by giving to this idea is—at least, I fancy it is—of my invention.

“Give me a sheet of paper and a pencil,” he added, turning to his friend, “and with a few lines I can demonstrate clearly the whole thing.”

Hermann handed him what he wanted without a word. Warren then began gravely to draw a large semicircle, open at the top, and above the semicircular line a pendulum, which fell perpendicularly, and touched the circumference at the exact point where on the dial of a clock would be inscribed the figure VI. This done, he wrote on the right-hand side of the pendulum, beginning from the bottom and at the place of the hours V, IV, III, the words, *Moderate Desires—Great Hopes, Ambition—Unbridled Passion, Mania of Greatness*. Then, turning the paper upside-down, he wrote on the opposite side, where on a dial would be marked VII, VIII, IX, the words, *Slight*

Troubles—*Deep Sorrow*, *Disappointment*—*Despair*. Lastly, in the place of No. VI, just where the pendulum fell, he sketched a large black spot, which he shaded off with great care, and above which he wrote, like a scroll, *Dead Stop*, *Absolute Repose*.

Having finished this little drawing, Warren laid down his pipe, inclined his head on one side, and, raising his eyebrows, examined his work with a critical frown. "This compass is not yet quite complete," he said; "there is something missing. Between *Dead Stop* and *Moderate Desires* on the right, and *Slight Troubles* on the left, there is the beautiful line of *Calm and Rational Indifference*. However, such as the drawing is, it is sufficient to demonstrate my theory. Do you follow me?"

Hermann nodded affirmatively. He was greatly pained. In lieu of the friend of his youth, for whom he had hoped a brilliant future, here was a poor monomaniac!

"You see," said Warren, speaking collectedly, like a professor, "if I raise my pendulum till it reaches the point of *Moderate Desires*, and then let it go, it will naturally swing to the point of *Slight Troubles*, and go no farther. Then it will oscillate for some time in a more and more limited space on the line of *Indifference*, and finally it will stand still without any jerk on *Dead Stop*, *Absolute Repose*. That is a great consolation!"

He paused, as if waiting for some remark from Hermann ; but, as the latter remained silent, Warren resumed his demonstration.

“You understand now, I suppose, what I am coming to. If I raise the pendulum to the point of *Ambition* or *Mania of Greatness*, and then let it go, that same law which I have already applied will drive it to *Deep Sorrow* or *Despair*. That is quite clear, is it not?”

“Quite clear,” repeated Hermann, sadly.

“Very well,” continued Warren, with perfect gravity ; “for my misfortune, I discovered this fine theory rather late. I had not set bounds to my dreams and limited them to trifles. I had wished to be President of the Republic, an illustrious *savant*, the husband of Ellen. No great things, eh ? What say you to my modesty ? I had raised the pendulum to such a giddy height that when it slipped from my impotent hands it naturally performed a long oscillation, and touched the point *Despair*. That was a miserable time. I hope you have never suffered what I suffered then. I lived in a perpetual nightmare—like the stupor of intoxication.” He paused, as he had done before, and then, with a painfully nervous laugh, he added : “Yes, like intoxication. I drank.” Suddenly a spasm seemed to pass over his face ; he looked serious and sad as before, and he said, with a shudder, “It’s a terrible thing to see one’s self inwardly, and to know that one is fallen !”

After this he remained long silent. At last, raising his head, he turned to his friend and said, "Have you had enough of my story, or would you like to hear it to the end?"

"I am grieved at all you have told me," said Hermann. "But pray go on ; it is better I should know all."

"Yes ; and I feel, too, that it relieves me to pour out my heart. Well, I used to drink. One takes the horrid habit in America far easier than anywhere else. I was obliged to give up more than one good situation because I had ceased to be *respectable*. Anyhow, I always managed to find employment without any great difficulty. I never suffered from want, though I have never known plenty. If I spent too much in drink, I took it out of my dress and my boots.

"Eighteen months after I had left Elmira, I met Ellen one day in Central Park, in New York. I was aware that she had been married a twelve-month. She knew me again at once, and spoke to me. I would have wished to sink into the earth. I knew that my clothes were shabby, that I looked poor, and I fancied that she must discern on my face the traces of the bad habits I had contracted. But she did not, or would not, see anything. She held out her hand, and said, in her gentle voice :

" ' I am very glad to see you again, Mr. Warren. I have inquired about you, but neither my

father nor Francis could tell me what had become of you. I want to ask you to resume the lessons you used to give me. Perhaps you do not know where I live? This is my address,' and she gave me her card.

"I stammered out a few unmeaning words in reply to her invitation. She looked at me, smiling kindly the while; but suddenly the smile vanished, and she added: 'Have you been ill, Mr. Warren? You seem worn.'

"'Yes,' I answered, too glad to find an excuse for my appearance—'yes, I have been ill, and I am still suffering.'

"'I am very sorry,' she said, in a low voice.

"Laugh at me, Hermann—call me an incorrigible madman; but believe me when I say that her looks conveyed to me the impression of more than common interest or civility. A thrilling sense of pain shot through my frame. What had I done that I should be so cruelly tried? A mist passed before my eyes; anxiety, intemperance, sleeplessness, had made me weak. I tottered backward a few steps. She turned horribly pale. All around us was the crowd—the careless, indifferent crowd.

"'Come and see me soon,' she added, hastily, and left me. I saw her get into a carriage, which she had doubtless quitted to take a walk; and, when she drove past, she put her head out and

looked at me with her eyes wide open—there was an almost wildly anxious expression in them.

“I went home. My way led me past her house—it was a palace. I shut myself up in my wretched hotel-room, and once more I fell to dreaming. Ellen loved me; she admired me; she was not forever lost to me! The pendulum was swinging, you see, up as high as *Madness*. Explain to me, if you can, how it happens that a being perfectly rational in ordinary life should at certain seasons, and, so to speak, voluntarily, be bereft of reason. To excuse and explain my temporary insanity, I am ready to admit that the excitement to which I gave way may have been a symptom of the nervous malady which laid hold of me a few days later, and stretched me for weeks upon a bed of pain.

“As I became convalescent, reason and composure returned. But it was too late. In the space of two months, twenty years had passed over my head. When I rose from my sick-bed I was as feeble and as broken-down as you see me now. My past had been cheerless and dim, without one ray of happiness; yet that past was all my life! Henceforward there was nothing left for me to undertake, to regret, or to desire. The pendulum swung idly backward and forward on the line of *Indifference*. I wonder what are the feelings of successful men—of men who *have* been victorious generals, prime-ministers, cele-

brated authors, and that sort of thing ! Upheld by a legitimate pride, do they retire satisfied from the lists when evening comes, or do they lay down their arms as I did, disappointed and dejected, and worn out with the fierce struggle ? Can no man with impunity look into his own heart and ask himself how his life has been spent ? ”

Here Warren made a still longer pause than before, and appeared absorbed in gloomy thought. At last he resumed in a lower tone :

“ I had not followed up Ellen’s invitation. But in some way she had discovered my address, and knew of my illness. Do not be alarmed, my dear Hermann ; my story will not become romantic. No heavenly vision appeared to me during my fever ; I felt no gentle, white hands laid on my burning brow. I was nursed at the hospital, and very well nursed, too ; I figured there as ‘ Number 380,’ and the whole affair was, as you see, as prosaic as possible. But on quitting the hospital, and as I was taking leave of the manager, he handed me a letter, in which was inclosed a note for five hundred dollars. In the envelope there was also the following anonymous note :

“ ‘ An old friend begs your acceptance, as a loan, of the inclosed sum. It will be time enough to think of paying off this debt when you are strong enough to resume work, and you can then do it by installments, of which you can yourself

fix the amount, and remit them to the hospital of New York.'

"It was well meant, no doubt, but it caused me a painful impression. My determination was taken at once. I refused without hesitation. I asked the manager, who had been watching me with a friendly smile while I read the letter, whether he could give the name of the person who had sent it. In spite of his repeated assurances that he did not know it, I never doubted for a single instant that he was concealing the truth. After a few seconds' reflection, I asked if he would undertake to forward an answer to my unknown correspondent; and, on his consenting to do so, I promised that he should have my answer the next day.

"I thought long over my letter. One thing was plain to me—it was Ellen who had come to my help. How could I reject her generous aid without wounding her, or appearing ungrateful? After great hesitation, I wrote a few lines, which, as far as I can recollect, ran thus:

"'I thank you for the interest you have shown me, but it is impossible for me to accept the sum you place at my disposal. Do not be angry with me because I return it. Do not withdraw your sympathy; I will strive to remain worthy of it, and will never forget your goodness.'

"A few days later, after having confided this letter to the manager, I left New York for San

Francisco. For several years I heard nothing of Ellen ; her image grew gradually fainter, and at last almost disappeared from my memory.

“The dark river that bore the frail bark which carried me and my fortunes was carrying me smoothly and unconsciously along toward the mysterious abyss where all that exists is ingulfed. Its course lay through a vast desert ; and the banks which passed before my eyes were of fearful sameness. Indescribable lassitude took possession of my whole being. I had never, knowingly, practised evil ; I had loved and sought after good. Why, then, was I so wretched ? I would have blessed the rock which wrecked my bark, so that I might have been swallowed up and have gone down to my eternal rest. Up to the day when I heard of Ellen’s betrothal, I had hoped that the morrow would bring happiness. The long-wished-for morrow had come at last, gloomy and colorless, without realizing any of my vague hopes. Henceforward my life was at an end.”

Warren said these last words so indistinctly that Hermann could scarcely hear them ; he seemed to be speaking to himself rather than to his friend. Then he raised the forefinger of his right hand, and after moving it slowly from right to left, in imitation of the swing of a pendulum, he placed it on the large black dot he had drawn on the sheet of paper exactly below his pendulum,

and said : “ *Dead Stop, Absolute Repose.* Would that the end were come ! ”

Another and still longer interval of silence succeeded, and at last Hermann felt constrained to speak.

“ How came you to make up your mind,” he said, “ to return to Europe ? ”

“ Ah ! yes, to be sure,” answered Warren, hurriedly ; “ the story—the foolish story—is not ended. In truth it has no end, as it had no beginning ; it is a thing without form or purpose, and less the history of a life than of a mere journeying toward death. Still I will finish—following chronological order. It does not weary you ? ”

“ No, no ; go on, my dear friend.”

“ Very well. I spent several years in the United States. The pendulum worked well. It came and went, to and fro, slowly along the line of *Indifference*, without ever transgressing, as its extreme limits on either hand, *Moderate Desires* and *Slight Troubles*. I led obscurely a contemplative life, and I was generally considered a queer character. I fulfilled my duties, and took little heed of any one. Whenever I had an hour at my disposal, I sought solitude in the neighboring woods, far from the town and from mankind. I used to lie down under the big trees. Every season in turn, spring and summer, autumn and winter, had its peculiar charm for me. My heart, so full of bitterness, felt lightened as soon as I lis-

tened to the rustling of the foliage overhead. The forest ! There is nothing finer in all creation. A deep calm seemed to settle down upon me. I was growing old. I was forgetting. It was about this time that, in consequence of my complete indifference to all surroundings, I acquired the habit of answering 'Very well' to everything that was said. The words came so naturally that I was not aware of my continual use of them, until one day one of my fellow-teachers happened to tell me that masters and pupils alike had given me the nickname of 'Very well.' Is it not odd that one who has never succeeded in anything should be known as 'Very well?'

"I have only one other little adventure to relate, and I shall have told all. Then I can listen to your story.

"Last year, my journeyings brought me to the neighborhood of Elmira. It was holiday-time. I had nothing to do, and I had in my purse a hundred hardly-earned dollars, or thereabout. The wish seized me to revisit the scene of my joys and my sorrows. I had not set foot in the place for more than seven years. I was so changed that nobody could know me again ; nor would I have cared much if they had. After visiting the town and looking at my old school, and the house where Ellen had lived, I bent my steps toward the park, which is situated in the environs—a place where I used often to walk, in company of my youthful

dreams. It was September, and evening was closing in. The oblique rays of the setting sun sent a reddish gleam through the leafy branches of the old oaks. I saw a woman seated on a bench beneath a tree, on one side of the path. As I drew near I recognized Ellen. I remained rooted to the spot where I stood, not daring to move a step. She was stooping forward with her head bent down, while with the end of her parasol she traced lines upon the gravel. She had not seen me. I turned back instantly, and retired without making any noise. When I had gone a little distance, I left the path and struck into the wood. Once there, I looked back cautiously. Ellen was still at the same place, and in the same attitude. Heaven knows what thoughts passed through my brain ! I longed to see her closer. What danger was there ? I was sure she would not know me again. I walked toward her with the careless step of a casual passer-by, and in a few minutes passed before her. When my shadow fell on the path, she looked up, and our eyes met. My heart was beating fast. Her look was cold and indifferent ; but suddenly a strange light shot into her eyes, and she made a quick movement, as if to rise. I saw no more, and went on without turning round. Before I could get out of the park, her carriage drove past me, and I saw her once more, as I had seen her five years before in Central Park, pale, with distended eyes, and her anxious looks fixed upon

me. Why did I not bow to her? I cannot say ; my courage failed me. I saw the light die out of her eyes. I almost fancied that I saw her heave a sigh of relief, as she threw herself back carelessly in the carriage ; and she disappeared. I was then thirty-six, and I am almost ashamed to relate the schoolboy's trick of which I was guilty. I sent her the following lines : 'A devoted friend, whom you obliged in former days, and who met you yesterday in the park, without your recognizing him, sends you his remembrances.' I posted this letter a few minutes before getting into the train, which was to take me to New York ; and, as I did so, my heart beat as violently as though I had performed an heroic deed. Great adventures, forsooth ! And to think that my life presents none more striking, and that trifles such as these are the only food for my memory !

"A twelvemonth later, I met Francis Gilmore in Broadway. The world is small—so small that it is really difficult to keep out of the way of people one has once known. The likeness of my former pupil to his sister struck me, and I spoke to him. He looked at me at first with a puzzled expression, but, after a few moments of hesitation, he recognized me, a bright smile lighted up his pleasant face, and he shook hands warmly.

"'Mr. Warren,' he exclaimed, 'how glad I am to see you ! Ellen and I have often talked of you,

and wondered what could have become of you. Why did we never hear from you ?’

“ ‘I did not suppose it would interest you.’ I spoke timidly ; and yet I owed nothing to the young fellow, and wanted nothing of him.

“ ‘You wrong us by saying that,’ replied Francis ; ‘do you think me ungrateful ? Do you fancy I have forgotten our pleasant walks in former days, and the long conversations we used to have ? You alone ever taught me anything, and it is to you I owe the principles that have guided me through life. Many a day I have thought of you, and regretted you sincerely. As regards Ellen, no one has ever filled your place with her ; she plays, to this day, the same pieces of music you taught her, and follows all your directions with a fidelity that would touch you.’

“ ‘How are your father and mother, and how is your sister ?’ I inquired, feeling more deeply moved than I can express.

“ ‘My poor mother died three years ago. It is Ellen who keeps house now.’

“ ‘Your brother-in-law lives with you, then ?’

“ ‘My brother-in-law !’ replied Francis, with surprise ; ‘did you not know that he was on board the Atlantic, which was lost last year in the passage from Liverpool to New York ?’

“ ‘I could find no words to reply.

“ ‘As to that,’ added Francis, with great composure, ‘between you and me, he was no great

loss. My dear brother-in-law was not, by any means, what my father fancied he was when he gave him my sister as a wife. The whole family has often regretted the marriage. Ellen lived apart from her husband for many years before his death.'

"I nodded, so as to express my interest in his communications, but I could not for worlds have uttered a syllable.

"'You will come and see us soon, I hope,' added Francis, without noticing any emotion. 'We are still at the same place ; but, to make sure, here is my card. Come, Mr. Warren—name your own day to come and dine with us. I promise you a hearty welcome.'

"I got off by promising to write the next day, and we parted.

"Fortunately, my mind had lost its former liveliness. The pendulum, far from being urged to unruly motion, continued to swing slowly in the narrow space where it had oscillated for so many years. I said to myself that to renew my intimacy with the Gilmores would be to run the almost certain risk of reviving the sorrows and the disappointments of the past. I was then calm and rational. It would be madness in me, I felt, to aspire to the hand of a young, wealthy, and much-admired widow. To venture to see Ellen again, was to incur the risk of seeing my reason once more wrecked, and the fatal chimera which had

been the source of all my misery start into life again. If we are to believe what poets say, love ennobles man and exalts him into a demi-god. It may be so, but it turns him likewise into a fool and a madman. That was my case. At any cost I was to guard against that fatal passion. I argued seriously with myself, and I determined to let the past be, and to reject every opportunity of bringing it to life again.

“A few days before my meeting with Francis, I had received tidings of the death of an old relative, whom I scarcely knew. In my childhood I had, on one or two occasions, spent my holidays at his house. He was gloomy and taciturn, but nevertheless he had always welcomed me kindly. I have a vague remembrance of having been told that he had been in love with my mother once upon a time, and that, on hearing of her marriage, he had retired into the solitude which he never left till the day of his death. Be that as it may, I had not lost my place in his affections, it seems : he had continued to feel an interest in me ; and on his death-bed he had remembered me, and left me the greater part of his not very considerable fortune. I inherited little money ; but there was a small, comfortably-furnished country-house, and an adjoining farm let on a long lease for two hundred and forty pounds per annum. This was wealth for me, and more than enough to satisfy all my wants. Since I had heard of this legacy I

had been doubtful as to my movements. My chance meeting with Francis settled the matter. I resolved at once to leave America, and to return to live in my native country. I knew your address, and wrote to you at once. I trusted that the sight of my old and only friend would console me for the disappointments that life has inflicted on me—and I have not been deceived. At last I have been able to open my heart to a fellow-creature, and relieve myself of the heavy burden which I have borne alone ever since our separation. Now I feel lighter. You are not a severe judge. Doubtless you deplore my weakness, but you do not condemn me. If, as I have already said, I have done no good, neither have I committed any wicked action. I have been a nonentity—an utterly useless being—‘one too many,’ like the sad hero of Turgeneff’s sad story. Before leaving, I wrote to Francis, informing him that the death of a relative obliged me to return to Europe, and giving him your address, so as not to seem to be running away from him. Then I went on board, and at last reached your home. *Dixi!*”

Warren, who during this long story had taken care to keep his pipe alight, and had, moreover, nearly drained the bottle of port placed before him, now declared himself ready to listen to his friend’s confession. But Hermann had been saddened by all he had heard, and was in no humor for talking ; he remarked that it was getting late,

and proposed to postpone any further conversation till the morrow.

Warren merely replied, "Very well," knocked the ashes out of his pipe, shared out the remainder of the wine between his host and himself, and raising his glass, said, in a somewhat solemn tone, "To our youth, Hermann!" After emptying his glass at one draught, he replaced it on the table, and said, complacently: "It is long since I have drunk with so much pleasure; for this time I have not drunk to forgetfulness, but to memory."

II.

WARREN spent another week in Leipsic with his friend. No man was easier to live with: to every suggestion of Hermann's he invariably answered, "Very well;" and if Hermann proposed nothing, he was quite content to remain seated in a comfortable arm-chair by the fireside, holding a book which he scarcely looked at, and watching the long rolls of smoke from his pipe. He disliked new acquaintances; nevertheless, the friends to whom Hermann introduced him found in him a quiet, unobtrusive, and well-informed companion. He pleased everybody. There was something strange and yet attractive in his person; there was a "charm" about him, people said. Hermann felt the attraction without being able to define in what

it consisted. Their former friendship had been renewed unreservedly. The kind of fascination that Warren exercised over all those who approached him, often led Hermann to think that it was not unlikely that in his youth he had inspired a real love in Ellen Gilmore.

One evening Hermann took his friend to the theatre, where a comic piece was being performed. In his young days Warren had been very partial to plays of that kind, and his joyous peals of laughter on such occasions still rang in the ears of his friend. But the attempt was a complete failure. Warren watched the performance without showing the slightest interest, and never even smiled. During the opening scenes he listened with attention, as though he were assisting at some performance of the legitimate drama ; then, as if he could not understand what was going on before his eyes, he turned away with a wearied air and began looking at the audience. When, at the close of the second act, Hermann proposed that they should leave the house, he answered readily:

“Yes, let us go ; all this seems very stupid—we will be much better at home. There is a time for all things, and buffoonery suits me no longer.”

There was nothing left in Warren of the friend that Hermann had known fifteen years before. He loved him none the less ; on the contrary, to his affection for him had been superadded a feeling of deep compassion. He would have made

great sacrifices to secure his friend's happiness, and to see a smile light up the immovable features and the sorrowful dullness of the eye. His friendly anxiety had not been lost upon Warren ; and when the latter took his leave, he said, with emotion :

"You wish me well, my old friend. I see it and feel it ; and, believe me, I am grateful. We must not lose sight of each other again—I will write regularly."

A few days later Hermann received a letter for his friend. It was an American letter, and the envelope was stamped with the initials "E. H." They were those of Ellen Howard, the heroine of Warren's sad history. He forwarded the letter immediately, and wrote at the same time to his friend, "I hope the inclosed brings you good news from America." But in his reply Warren took no notice of this passage, and made no allusion to Ellen. He only spoke of the new house in which he had just settled himself—"to end," as he said, "his days ;" and he pressed Hermann to come and join him. The two friends at last agreed to pass Christmas and New-Year's-day together ; but, when December came, Warren urged his friend to hasten his arrival.

"I do not feel well," he wrote, "and am often so weary that I stay at home all day. I have made no new acquaintances, and, most likely, will make none. I am alone. Your society would give me

great pleasure. Come; your room is ready, and will be, I trust, to your liking. There are a large writing-table and tolerably well-filled book-shelves; you can write there quite at your ease, without fear of disturbance. Come as soon as possible, my dear friend. I am expecting you impatiently."

Hermann happened to be at leisure, and was able to comply with his friend's wish, and to go to him in the first week of December. He found Warren looking worn and depressed. It was in vain he sought to induce him to consult a physician. Warren would reply:

"Doctors can do nothing for my complaint. I know where the shoe pinches. A physician would order me probably to seek relaxation and amusement, just as he would advise a poor devil whose blood is impoverished by bad food to strengthen himself with a generous diet and good wine. The poor man could not afford to get the good living, and I do not know what could enliven or divert me. Travel? I like nothing so well as sitting quietly in my arm-chair. New faces? They would not interest me—yours is the only company I prefer to solitude. Books? I am too old to take pleasure in learning new things, and what I have learned has ceased to interest me. It is not always easy to get what might do one good, and we must take things as they are."

Hermann noticed, as before, that his friend ate little, but that, on the other hand, he drank a good

deal. The sincere friendship he felt for him emboldened him to make a remark on the subject.

"It is true," said Warren, "I drink too much ; but what can I do ? Food is distasteful to me, and I must keep up my strength somehow. I am in a wretched state ; my health is ruined."

One evening, as the two friends were seated together in Warren's room, while the wind and sleet were beating against the window-panes, the invalid began of his own accord to speak about Ellen.

"We now correspond regularly," he said. "She tells me in her last letter that she hopes soon to see me. Do you know, Hermann, that she is becoming an enigma for me ? It is very evident that she does not treat me like other people, and I often wonder and ask myself what I am in her eyes ? What does she feel toward me ? Love ? That is inadmissible. Pity, perhaps ? This, then, is the end of my grand dreams—to be an object of pity ? I have just answered her letter to say that I am settled here with the fixed intention of ending my useless existence in quiet and idleness. Do you remember a scene in Heinrich Heine's 'Reisebilder,' when a young student kisses a pretty girl, who lets him have his own way, and makes no great resistance, because he has told her, 'I will be gone to-morrow at dawn, and I will never see you again !' The certainty of never seeing a person again gives a man the courage to say things

that otherwise he would have kept hidden in the most secret depths of his being. I feel that my life is drawing to a close. Do not say no, my dear friend; my presentiments are certain. I have written it to Ellen. I have told her other things besides. What folly! All I have ever done has been folly or chimera. I end my life logically, in strict accordance with my whole past, by making my first avowal of love on my death-bed. Is not that as useless a thing as can be?"

Hermann would have wished to know some particulars about this letter, but Warren replied, somewhat vaguely: "If I had a copy of my letter, I would show it to you willingly. You know my whole story, and I would not be ashamed to lay before you my last act of folly. I wrote about a fortnight ago, when I felt sure that death was drawing near. I was in a fever, not from fear—Death gains but little by taking my life—but from a singular species of excitement. I do not remember what were the words I used. Who knows? Perhaps this last product of my brain may have been quite a poetical performance. Never mind! I do not repent of what I have done; I am glad that Ellen should know at last that I have loved her silently and hopelessly. If that is not disinterested, what is?" he added, with a bitter smile.

Christmas went by sadly. Warren was now so weak that he could scarcely leave his bed for

two or three hours each day. Hermann had taken upon himself to send for a doctor, but this latter had scarcely known what to prescribe. Warren was suffering from no special malady ; he was dying of exhaustion. Now and then, during a few moments, which became daily more rare and more brief, his vivacity would return ; but the shadow of Death was already darkening his mind.

On New-Year's-eve he got up very late. "We will welcome in the New-Year," he said to Hermann. "I hope it may bring you happiness ; I know it will bring me rest." A few minutes before midnight, he opened the piano, and played with solemnity, and as if it had been a choral, a song of Schumann's, entitled "To the Drinking-Cup of a Departed Friend." Then, on the first stroke of midnight, he filled two glasses with some old Rhenish wine, and raised his own glass slowly. He was very pale, and his eyes were shining with feverish light. He was in a state of strange and fearful excitement. He looked at the glass which he held, and repeated deliberately a verse of the song which he had just been playing. "The vulgar cannot understand what I see at the bottom of this cup." Then, at one draught, he drained the full glass.

While he was thus speaking and drinking, he had taken no notice of Hermann, who was watching him with consternation. Recovering himself at length, he exclaimed : "Another glass, Her-

mann ! To friendship !” He drained this second glass, like the first, to the very last drop ; and then, exhausted by the effort he had made, he sank heavily on a chair. Soon after, Hermann led him, like a sleepy child, to his bed.

During the days that followed, he was unable to leave his room ; and the doctor thought it right to warn Hermann that all the symptoms seemed to point to a fatal issue.

On the 8th of January a servant from the hotel in the little neighboring town brought a letter, which, he said, required an immediate answer. The sick man was then lying almost unconscious. Hermann broke the seal without hesitation, and read as follows :

“MY DEAR FRIEND : A visit to Europe, which my father had long planned, has at last been undertaken. I did not mention it to you, in order to have the pleasure of surprising you. On reaching this place, I learn that the illness of which you spoke in your last letter has not yet left you. Under these circumstances, I will not venture to present myself without warning you of my arrival, and making sure that you are able to receive me. I am here with my brother, who, like myself, would not come so near to you without seeing you. My father has gone on to Paris, where Francis and I will join him in a few days.

“ELLEN.”

Hermann, after one instant's thought, took up his hat and dismissed the messenger, saying he would give the answer himself. At the hotel he sent in his card, with the words, "From Mr. Warren," and was immediately ushered into Ellen's presence.

She was alone. Hermann examined her rapidly. He saw an extremely beautiful woman, whose frank and fearless eyes were fixed on him with a questioning look.

Hermann had not frequented the society of women much, and was usually rather embarrassed in their presence. But on this occasion he thought only of his friend, and found no difficulty in explaining the motive of his visit. He told her his friend was ill—very ill—dying—and that he had opened the letter addressed to Warren. Ellen did not answer for some time ; she seemed not to have understood what she had heard. After a while her eyes filled with tears, and she asked whether she could see Mr. Warren. On Hermann answering in the affirmative, she further inquired whether her brother might accompany her.

"Two visitors might fatigue the invalid too much," said Hermann ; "your brother may come later."

"Are you not afraid that my visit may tire him?"

"I do not think so ; it will make him very happy."

Ellen only took a few minutes to put on her hat and cloak, and they started. The short journey was accomplished in silence. When they reached the house, Hermann went in first to see how the dying man was. He was lying in his bed, in the delirium of fever, muttering incoherent sentences. Nevertheless, he recognized Hermann, and asked for something to drink. After having allayed his thirst, he closed his eyes, as if to sleep.

"I have brought you a friend," said Hermann ;
"will you see him ?"

"Hermann ? He is always welcome."

"No ; it is a friend from America."

"From America ? . . . I lived there many years. How desolate and monotonous were the shores I visited ! . . ."

"Will you see your friend ?"

"I am carried away by the current of the river. In the distance I see dark and shadowy forms ; there are hills full of shade and coolness, . . . but I will never rest there."

Hermann retired noiselessly, and returned almost immediately with Ellen.

Warren, who had taken no notice of him, continued to follow the course of his wandering thoughts.

"The river is drawing near to the sea. Already I can hear the roar of the waves. . . . The banks are beginning to be clothed with verdure.

The hills are drawing nearer. . . . It is dark now. Here are the big trees beneath which I have dreamed so often. A radiant apparition shines through their foliage. . . . It comes toward me. . . . Ellen !”

She was standing beside the bed. The dying man saw her, and without showing the least surprise, said with a smile : “Thank God ! you have come in time. I knew you were coming.”

He murmured a few unintelligible words, and then remained silent for a long while. His eyes were wide open. Suddenly he cried, “Hermann !”

Hermann came and stood beside Ellen.

“The pendulum. . . . You know what I mean ?” A frank, childish smile—the smile of his student-days—lighted up his pallid face. He raised his right hand, and tracing in the air with his forefinger a wide semicircle, to imitate the oscillation of a pendulum, he said, “Then !” He then figured in the same manner a more limited and slower movement, and, after repeating it several times, said, “Now !” Lastly, he pointed straight before him with a motionless and almost menacing finger, and said, with a weak voice, “Soon !”

He spoke no more, and closed his eyes. The breathing was becoming very difficult.

Ellen bent over him, and called him softly, “Henry, Henry !” He opened his eyes. She brought her mouth close to his ear, and said, with a sob, “I have always loved you.”

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"I knew it from the first," he said, quietly and with confidence.

A gentle expression stole over his countenance, and life seemed to return. Once more he had the confident look of youth. A sad and beautiful smile played on his lips ; he took the hand of Ellen in his, and kissed it gently.

"How do you feel now?" inquired Hermann. The old answer, "Very well."

His hands were plucking at the bedclothes, as if he strove to cover his face with them. Then his arms stiffened and the fingers remained motionless.

"Very well," he repeated.

He appeared to fall into deep thought. There was a long pause. At last he turned a dying look, fraught with tender pity and sadness, toward Ellen, and in a low voice, which was scarcely audible, he said these two words, with a slight emphasis on the first—"Perfectly well."

THE END.

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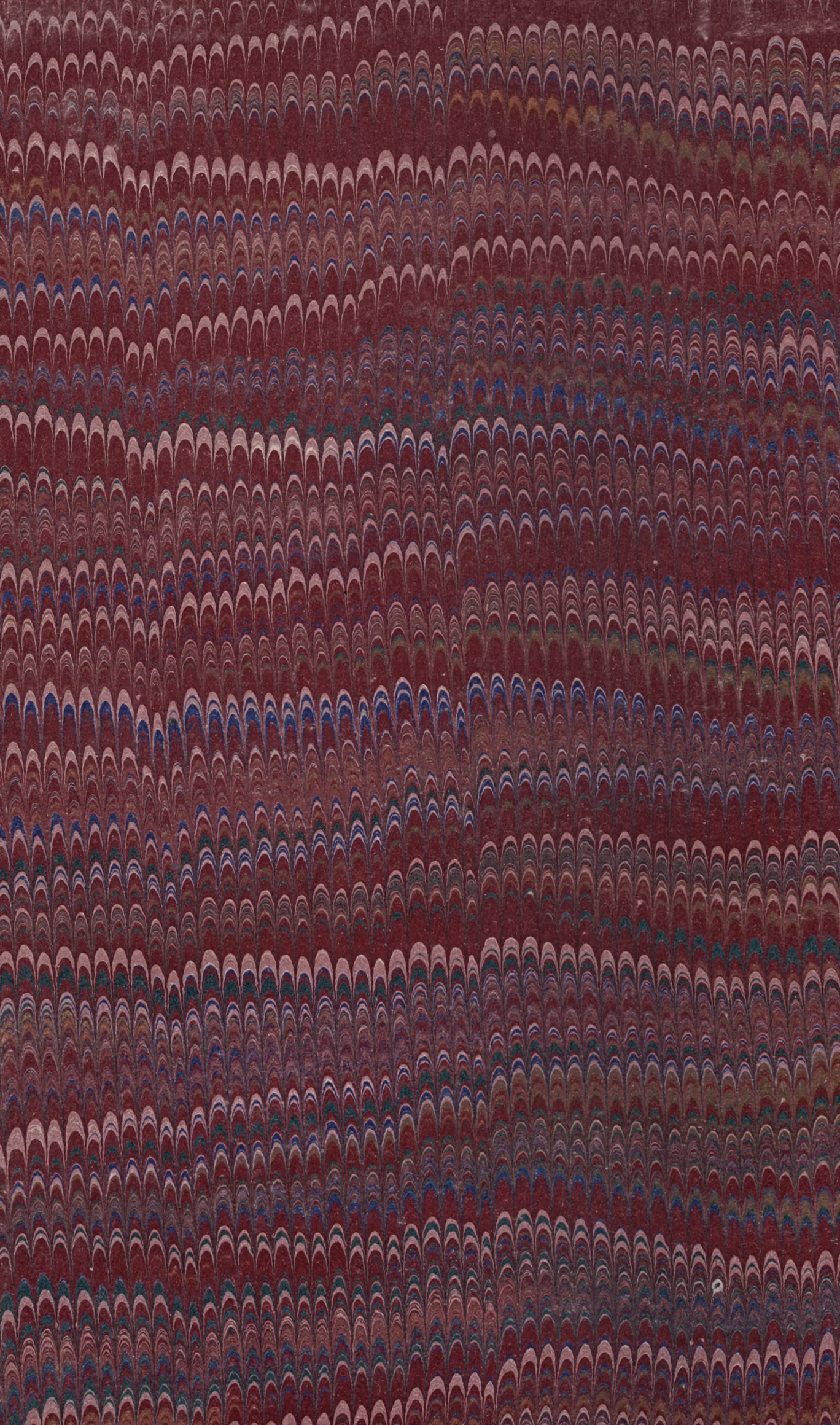
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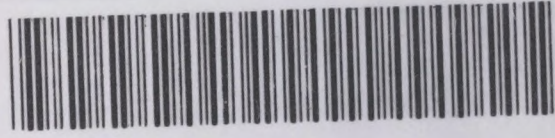
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